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JPRS-NEA-85-054

15 April 1985

## Near East/South Asia Report

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15 April 1985

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REGIONAL AFFAIRS

SOLUTION TO SAHARA PROBLEM SEEN KEY TO ARAB MAGHREB UNITY

Beirut AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI in Arabic 28 Jan-3 Feb 85 p 38

[Article by Hadi al-Ashqar: "Arab Maghreb Swings Between Unity and Division"]

[Text] Prior to the independence of the Maghreb countries, the "unity experiment" was founded on the principle of fighting foreign occupation in general. At that time, no "regional interests" had developed and no "political borders" had been entrenched. The "Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerian youth were engaged in a great unity action," according to Tahar Belkhodja, a former Tunisian minister. That youth was "motivated by a sweeping popular feeling of unity among all the demographic groups in North Africa and the Maghreb, even though this feeling was based on emotion."

Now, the issue goes far beyond "unity action" and division. The Maghreb's future is "tied" to collective action vis-a-vis the blocs that have emerged within unionist frameworks, especially the European bloc [EEC] with which we conduct 80 percent of our economic transactions and which has its political influence, regardless of whether we like it or not. Fundamentally, the coordinated action of the Arab gulf bloc and all the Arab efforts for unity make unity and federated action something desirable and greatly beneficial to the Maghreb countries. This is the conclusion of Tahar Belkhodja, the former Tunisian official. At the same time, Belkhodja believes that it is necessary to create the right conditions for any action toward unity and not to rush into embracing this action, taking into consideration all the past unity experiences.

The big surprise is that the Arab Maghreb countries talk a lot about "unity" but take no serious steps in this direction, at times because of ideological reasons and at others because of disputes over borders. Despite the efforts exerted to hold an Arab Maghreb summit, the endeavors have failed and the disagreement between Algeria and Morocco over the Western Sahara's future has overshadowed all other issues to the extent that Morocco wants to build a wall along the Sahara area adjacent to Algeria's borders because Algerian territory is used to launch military operations against Moroccan forces in the Western Sahara.

The first unity efforts came from Libya and in the direction of Tunisia. This endeavor, made by Libyan President Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi in 1974, was somewhat hasty and did not last long because it failed to take into consideration the particular characteristics of each country. This is the first point.

The other is that the endeavor was confined to Libya and Tunisia, excluding the other parties. At the time, Algeria believed that no change could be made in the political and geographic entity without the approval of the entire area. This is why the conditions in the area became tense at a time when the Western Sahara crisis was also beginning to erupt. This crisis is as significant to the Arab Maghreb countries as is the Palestinian crisis to the Arab East countries.

The Western Sahara is now the basis of the alliances that have emerged between the Arab Maghreb countries, which are shifting and unstable alliances. Libya, for example, supported the POLISARIO for a long time and even constituted an active rival to Algeria in this regard. Then suddenly, the new unity experiment between Morocco and Libya came to raise the problem of the relationship between Libya and the POLISARIO and the consequences of the likely "political tepidity" between Libya and Algeria, keeping in mind that the common ideological denominators between Libya and Morocco are not founded on a firm base.

However, the alliances, disputes or unity experiments between the Maghreb countries cannot be understood on the basis of ideology. How could we then explain the "union" between Morocco and Libya or the unionist cooperation treaty between Algeria and Tunisia? There is the factor of borders which constitutes a practical basis for understanding what is happening. There are border problems between Algeria and Libya, there is the Sahara problem between Algeria and Morocco and there is Tunisia, which falls between Algeria and Libya. Among these countries, Tunisia finds itself committed to a position that helps bring the viewpoints closer to each other. The cooperation treaty between Tunisia and Algeria is open for the area's other countries to join it. To conclude the treaty, Tunisia stipulated the sole condition that the border problems be settled in accordance with the wish of the other partner, Algeria. Thus, when Libyan President Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi asked to join the cooperation treaty, Tunisia and Algeria agreed, provided that the Libyan president recognize the borders after the border disputes are settled. Al-Qadhafi's objection was that recognition of any geographic borders is in conflict with the concept of Arab unity. Consequently, Libya has stayed out of the cooperation treaty, as has Morocco because of the Sahara problem. Meanwhile, Mauritania has joined the treaty.

What we have pointed out seems necessary in order to understand the reasons that have united Morocco and Libya. The federation agreement between Morocco and Libya is, in a way, a "reaction" to the cooperation treaty between Tunisia and Algeria, meaning that insofar as the future is concerned neither the Tunisian-Algerian treaty nor the Moroccan-Libyan treaty will solve the area's problems. These are chronic problems that limit the effectiveness of any treaty. The "unity experiments" we are currently going through are more "superficial" than real, according to a neutral Tunisian political observer.

The beginning of a solution to the problems of the Arab Maghreb countries lies in solving the Sahara problem. Algeria wants the Maghreb to consist of six states, including the Sahara Republic, whereas Morocco wants the Sahara as part of the "Moroccan realm." In any event, the Maghreb countries live in a turbulence that requires a new balance. But it doesn't seem that the unity experiments we are witnessing are the gate to this balance.

ARMENIAN AFFAIRS

ARMENIAN QUESTION TO BE DISCUSSED BY EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Istanbul MARMARA in Armenian 8 Mar 85 pp 1,4

[Text] Brussels--Following the trial in connection with the Orly incident, the Armenian question has once again become a subject of discussion in the European Common Market, and, in particular, the European Parliament has placed the issue on its agenda.

According to political observers, the situation can be outlined as follows: Belgian parliamentarian Jaak Vandemeulebroucke, who was assigned the task of preparing a report on the Armenian question, began his work last December and held some contacts. It is now reported that he has already begun drafting the introductory section of the report and that he will try to complete the entire report before the April session of the EEC Political Committee. These worrisome developments can be summarized under four headings:

- a) The fact that the resolution has been put on the agenda of the European Parliament is in itself an unfavorable development because Turkey is virtually defenseless in this organization since it will not have a representative of its own during the review and discussion of the resolution. Hence, only indirect assistance can be expected, and the likelihood for that is very little.
- b) The selection of Jaak Vandemeulebroucke as the researcher on this issue cannot be considered a favorable development for us since he is part of a group within the European Parliament which consists of various factions. He is also a member of the Flemish nationalist movement, which is a minority, and he can be influential only when he can speak for all minorities.
- c) The general impression is that the report that will be prepared will be favorable toward the "Armenian viewpoint," although it is expected that the report will not emphasize the allegation of genocide. It is believed that the Belgian parliamentarian will particularly focus on allegations of oppression of the Armenians currently living in Turkey. In that regard, although an invitation was extended to him by Ankara, Vandemeulebroucke declined it and did not come to Turkey. This is another source of concern.
- d) The fourth source of concern for Turkey is the generally unfavorable atmosphere which already exists in the European Parliament and which is confirmed on every occasion.

ARMENIAN AFFAIRS

THREATS REPORTED AGAINST TURKISH DIPLOMATS IN EUROPE

Istanbul MARMARA in Armenian 9 Mar 85 pp 1,4

[Text] Brussels--The verdict announced in Creteil in connection with the Orly incident and the conviction of three Armenian terrorists has prompted ASALA [Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia] to issue new threats, and, as a result, strict security measures have been taken in and around Turkish diplomatic and representative missions in several countries.

The French secret service has learned that ASALA is planning operations to assassinate Turkish diplomats in Belgium, Holland, and Austria.

According to the French secret service, Turkish officials and local authorities in the said countries have already been notified about these plans. It is reported that the strictest precautions have already been taken and that all the targeted missions are being carefully guarded. In this connection, Belgian authorities have begun searching for the explosive-laden vehicle which reportedly entered that country some time ago.

In Brussels, the police noticed a suspicious automobile carrying Dutch license plates in front of the Turkish Tourism Office, but when the car was searched nothing was found.

Meanwhile, unidentified persons called the AFP's Paris office and stated that ASALA will continue its operations against Turks and Turkish organizations. Strict security measures have also been taken in France and all security agencies have been put on the alert following recent threats by ASALA.

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ARMENIAN AFFAIRS

TURKISH EMBASSY ASSAILANTS INTERROGATED

Istanbul MARMARA in Armenian 14 Mar 85 pp 1,4

[Text] Ottawa--A Canadian court yesterday held an initial hearing to interrogate the three Armenian terrorists who occupied the Turkish embassy two days ago and who, after killing a guard, held the occupants of the building as hostages for more than four hours. Ambassador Coskun Kirca managed to escape by jumping from a window, but broke a leg and an arm and suffered other bodily injuries as a result of the fall. The ambassador stayed in that condition for a full four hours in mud and snow and was taken to the hospital at the first opportune moment. At the hospital he underwent surgery and his condition has been steadily improving while everyone remains shaken by the incident.

The incident caused deep grief in Ankara. The Grand National Assembly will hold a special session to discuss the incident. Minister of State and Deputy Foreign Minister Mesut Yilmaz stated that this was the second attack by the Armenian Revolutionary Army on a Turkish embassy. The first attack was staged against the Turkish embassy in Portugal and had a bloody ending.

Responding to the incident, President Kenan Evren sent messages to Kirca and other pertinent authorities condemning terrorism once again and demanding from all governments to take more effective measures to combat terrorism.

Meanwhile, Canadian authorities who have been investigating the incident have confirmed that the security measures that were in place were inadequate and have stepped up their efforts to protect foreign diplomats better against all possible hazards.

Terrorists Planned to Blow up Embassy

Security officials in Ottawa have been conducting their investigations with great care. Some remarkable facts have emerged from these investigations. During the initial interrogation of the terrorists it was learned that what they had planned was completely different from what happened two days ago. According to information obtained and conclusions reached by interrogating officer (Lonchan), the goal of the three Armenian terrorists was to kill Ambassador Kirca and to blow up the embassy building afterwards, as evidenced by the explosives that were placed everywhere in the building. The explosives were later defused by bomb experts.

During their initial interrogation, the terrorists made some significant confessions. The hearing was adjourned to 20 March in order to complete some reports and to gather additional evidence.

Meanwhile, it was notable that the terrorists knew everything about the security measures inside and around the embassy building. This is evidenced by the fact that they went over the iron fence from the roof a truck since they knew that the fence was electrified at the time. This fact has given rise to suspicions that the terrorists had been given some information by the Pinkerton agency or by other sources. Pinkerton is the company which equipped the embassy with security devices which were known to very few people.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Kirca's hospital room is being continually changed to guard him against any possible attacks. The Canadian press, on the other hand, has been criticizing the unforgivable fatalism of the Canadian government in failing to build a security wall in front of the embassy building.

#### Kirca Criticized for Leaving Family Behind

While the reverberations of the assault on the Turkish embassy in Ottawa continue, various interpretations and viewpoints have been expressed. Although the identity of the three terrorists has been determined, Turkey insists that their identity documents are forged and that their true identities are different.

While some circles have expressed relief over Ambassador Kirca's escape, there has been public criticism against him for having abandoned his family in order to escape. The envoy's spouse, Bige Kirca, stated that she suggested to her husband to flee because she felt certain that he was the main target of the terrorists. Meanwhile, the Canadian police has reported that at the time of the incident Kirca was having a nervous breakdown and that he jumped off the second-story window in an unconscious state. However, reports to the effect that the terrorists pushed him off the window have been dismissed. The police report on the incident states that Kirca was in such a hurry that he did not even remember to take his pistol.

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EGYPT

NDP DEPUTY CHAIRMAN DISCUSSES U.S., SOVIET ROLES IN MIDEAST

Cairo MAYU in Arabic 25 Feb 85 p 17

[Interview with Dr Mustafa Khalil, National Democratic Party deputy chairman, by Sana' al-Sa'id: "Dr Mustafa Khalil to MAYU: United States, a Full Partner, Is Still Mere Observer; Jordanian-Palestinian Agreement Gives Egypt Greater Flexibility in Movement"]

[Text] The Vienna Mideast talks between the United States and the Soviet Union ended last Wednesday.

These talks between the two superpowers have aroused numerous questions and much speculation.

Some political observers have said that the talks did not seek to achieve significant or meaningful resolutions. Others have said that the talks were concerned with the interests of the two superpowers solely and not with the interests of the area's countries.

However, there is a question that continues to hang in the air: are there opportunities to achieve progress in the Middle East in the presence of the two superpowers?

This question has been the focal point of this interview with Dr Mustafa Khalil, the NDP [National Democratic Party] deputy chairman.

[Question] Talks on the Middle East were held between the two superpowers in October 1977. On 19 February 1985, another round of talks was held between them. The question is: is the ground better paved at present than it was 7 years ago for finding a common denominator in the U.S. and Soviet views on a settlement in the area?

[Answer] We must take into consideration here what the U.S. side has been eager to reiterate, even before the latest Vienna talks, namely that these talks will not assume the character of negotiations. What is meant by this is that these talks are different, for example, from the disarmament negotiations which lead to formulating a solution to a problem on which negotiations are held and that this solution assumes its binding quality on both sides in

accordance with the laws. But the Middle East talks are a mere exchange of viewpoints and a review of the positions of both sides. As the United States has stated frankly, the talks are intended to prevent an escalation of friction between the two superpowers in the area.

[Question] This means that the talks that have been held are for the purpose of achieving detente between them and not of creating chances for a settlement of the area's issues. Therefore, is it wise for one to be suspicious of the development of any meeting in the viewpoints of the two superpowers in connection with the area?

[Answer] One fears that the talks may have been held for the basic purpose of redividing the spheres of influence between them, as happened at Yalta and even though the conditions are different now from the conditions prevalent at that time. Therefore, it is my assessment that when the two superpowers hold discussions on an area, they simply review the conditions of the areas that are sensitive to them.

[Question] In light of the developments taking place, there is a tendency to include the Soviet Union in the efforts exerted to achieve a settlement for the area. The people with this inclination believe that the only formula capable of achieving progress is a joint U.S.-Soviet initiative.

[Answer] It is my opinion that any initiative must come fundamentally from the two parties to the conflict, especially the Arab side. We have numerous initiatives, the latest being the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement. This is because the approach of the two superpowers toward solving the Middle East problem is well known. There is agreement between them on the need for the Palestinians and the Arabs to recognize Israel, even though the Soviet side is clearer than the U.S. side in connection with the recognition of the PLO and of other Palestinian demands. But what is important is that the two superpowers agree on the need to settle the conflict by negotiations and peacefully. There remains a single point of disagreement displayed in the Soviet Union's wish to take part in the peace process and in the U.S. failure to agree to this wish in response to Israel's request.

[Question] Does this mean that the Soviet Union will continue to be denied participation as long as Israel is the side with the decision-making power, the side that controls the issue and the side that continues to refuse Soviet participation in the peace process?

[Answer] By examining Israel's foreign policy in the area and examining the statements of Israel's officials, it becomes obvious that Israel always presents itself as a strategic ally of the United States and as the striking military force in the area. On the basis of this logic, it has been able to persuade U.S. public opinion and the U.S. military establishment to conclude the latest strategic treaty between Israel and the United States--a treaty that yields numerous major benefits to Israel. Therefore, it is an essential element of Israel's military and economic policy for the Israeli politicians to portray their state as the strong ally of the United States. Israel's rejection of Soviet participation emphasizes this interpretation to the United States.

The second point is that Israel's policy is founded on military superiority over its neighbors. Therefore, the Soviet Union's supplying of weapons to Syria and to the PLO previously is in conflict with Israel's policy.

[Question] Can the Israeli rejection of the Soviet Union be viewed as an extension of the policy of a U.S. ally seeking to counter the Soviet tide in the area?

[Answer] Yes, certainly. Israel wants to prove to U.S. public opinion and the U.S. administration that it is the dam in the face of the dissemination of Soviet influence in the area. As long as no agreement is achieved between the two superpowers on the issue of the reduction of nuclear armaments, each power will take a watchful and cautious position toward the other.

[Question] Israel aside, there are Arab parties which believe that it is necessary that the Soviet Union participate in the peace process at present and which view this participation as a gain bolstering the Arab positions?

[Answer] The basis in the negotiation process are the parties to the conflict, meaning that should agreement be reached between King Husayn and the Palestinians and should the various viewpoints agree in the future on this agreement with Israel as a basis for negotiation, then the other Arab countries should approve the agreement as long as Husayn and the Palestinians have agreed to support it and as long as the negotiations do not result in the conclusion of an agreement between Israel and the other Arab countries. I do not believe that the Arab countries have the right to impose a viewpoint conflicting with the viewpoint of the people concerned with the issue. On the contrary, I expect the Arab countries to approve what the Palestinians agree to. As for the rejectionist states, they will persist in their rejection. But this rejection has no significance because these states are no longer custodians of the Palestinians' right to make decisions.

[Question] If the right background for negotiations between the parties to the conflict is established will these negotiations take place under the canopy of an international conference that includes the two superpowers or under a U.S. canopy compatible with the slogan of the full partner?

[Answer] We must note here that Israel persists in rejecting Soviet participation in the peace process, even though there are signs indicating that the latest Vienna meeting touched on the issue of permitting Soviet Jews to emigrate in accordance with the Helsinki human rights treaty--which can be considered a bargaining point that Israel may utilize in the future and for which it may, in return, abandon its insistence on non-participation by the Soviet Union.

Added to this is the request made by Peres recently that the Soviet Union restore diplomatic relations with Isreal, as well as his demand for diplomatic relations with China. This means that the international conference will be used by Israel as an argument with which to gain political advantages. On the other hand, the Soviet Union's rejection of the Husayn-'Arafat agreement requires persuading the Soviets to approve the agreement, especially since they have been invited to the international conference.

[Question] Does this mean that the U.S. role as a full partner has not gone beyond the role of observer?

[Answer] It is, in fact, closer to the role of observer than that of a partner. Should a disagreement over viewpoints develop, then there will be no chance of reaching a solution except between the two sides. The votes of the other partners are not taken to solve this or that problem. Rather, intervention by the United States has always taken place at the end of the line. Therefore, even if the Soviet Union, the European countries that are members of the Security Council or the United States are present in any negotiation, their role will not go beyond that of an observer.

[Question] While certain Arab sides express their approval of the convocation of an international conference, the signs do not actually indicate the likelihood of this proposal. So, on what does our position currently rely, especially since many issues have not crystallized yet?

[Answer] The main thing we should underline here is that the PLO has ultimately agreed, after freeing itself of all external custodianship, to settle the Palestinian problem by way of negotiations and peace despite the conflicting reports referring to reservations on the part of the PLO Executive Committee vis-a-vis Resolution 242 and President Reagan's initiative, considering that this initiative must rely on full Arab support. Therefore, refraining from immediately announcing the provisions of the Husayn-'Arafat agreement--an agreement which actually has been declared--was intended to give the Executive Committee the opportunity to examine the agreement carefully and to make its decision in a democratic manner reflecting the Palestinian will. Moreover, this agreement gives Egypt greater flexibility in moving and in negotiating with the U.S. side.

[Question] What about the area? On what does our position rely now?

[Answer] The Jordanian-Palestinian agreement gives Egypt greater flexibility in moving and in negotiating with the U.S. and Israeli sides. Egypt is the country qualified to perform this role. When President Mubarak heads for Washington, we wish him success in achieving a formula of negotiations and peace acceptable to all the parties concerned.

[Question] How can we perform this role when there are unresolved differences between us and Israel?

[Answer] Our differences with Israel center on three points: our insistence that Israel withdraw from Lebanon, and this is about to be achieved now that Israel has carried out the first phase of its withdrawal and announced that it will complete its withdrawal no later than next September at the latest. Then there is the disagreement over the treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Peres has announced his intention to respond to Egypt's wish on developing trust and on treating the Palestinians in accordance with the human rights charters. There is, third, the disagreement over Taba. In this regard, there are the negotiations which will be completed after the

Beersheba talks next month. Egypt's demand is clear, namely the need to resort to arbitration in implementing Article 7 of the peace treaty between the two countries. Therefore, we are moving in the direction of eliminating these differences which, if eliminated, will, I believe, make Egypt's positive role in the Palestinian issue more effective than it is under the canopy of these differences.

[Question] Let us return to the two superpowers by saying that the possibility of talks being held between them shows that the area is no longer engulfed in danger, since no direct regional conflict which may draw the two superpowers into it is currently taking place. Doesn't this indicate that there is a stable balance between the two superpowers?

[Answer] There is a difference between the Soviet presence, whether direct or indirect, in any state and the existence of balanced relations between any country with the Soviet Union or the United States. It is well known that Nicaragua, for example, is ruled by a government inclined toward communism. The United States considers this an extension of communism to its backyard and it has not hesitated to use force against the Nicaraguan government. The same thinking applies to the Soviets. When they felt that the internal conditions in Poland were posing a threat to them, they declared martial law and arrested Solidarity members. The Soviets invaded Hungary and Czechoslovakia in the past when Russia felt that the governments of these two countries were following a policy opposed to its policy.

As for the area, I don't believe that the two superpowers will reach the point of armed intervention or confrontation to support one side against the other. Rather, they are in agreement on peace in this area. This is why we have seen the United States at the Vienna talks ask the Soviet Union to exert its good offices with Syria so that the latter may not embark on any military ventures against Jordan.

[Question] It has been noticed that in their contacts, the two superpowers always focus on subsidiary issues that give the impression that the crux of the issue is the inter-Arab conflict, not the Arab-Israeli conflict.

[Answer] We must be realistic. For Egypt, for instance, if there is a conflict between Vietnam and Kampuchea, it will not be given the same degree of importance as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan or as the threats to which Sudan is exposed. There are major priorities that move each state.

Unless the regional issues are influential and unless we make them influential, each of the two superpowers will try to bolster its position in one of the area's countries without allowing this to lead to a solution to the area's major problems. At the same time, each superpower will make sure that this does not lead to friction that culminates in a military conflict or confrontation with the other superpower. There are red lines drawn between them and each is eager not to cross these lines. Therefore, the solution is in our hands. In the wake of the 1973 war, Arab strength qualified the Arabs, by all criteria, to perform an influential role with the two superpowers. Regrettably, inter-Arab conflicts have now obstructed such a role.

[Question] Can the two superpowers stay neutral vis-a-vis the Gulf war, especially since there are those who claim that neither has any interest in a victory by either side because such a victory is likely to change the strategic balance in the area?

[Answer] If we analyzed the Iraq-Iran conflict, we would find that the United States views each of the two countries as a threat to the Arab Gulf countries. Iraq, with its vast resources and with the implementation of its ambitious development plan, was even viewed as being qualified to occupy a position as a regional force to be taken into account. Consequently, there emerged the fear that Iraq would pose a threat to Israel's security if no comprehensive peace were established in the area. At the same time, the U.S. position was opposed to Iran, which was viewed as posing a threat to the security of the Arab countries and to the Gulf oil resources, in addition to the hostility that developed between Khomeyni's regime and the U.S. administration since the inception of the Iranian revolution. This is why the armed conflict between Iraq and Iran has been viewed as a means for weakening both of them, as an instrument for dissipating their threat and a tool for toppling Khomeyni's regime. As for the Soviet Union, it is also opposed to Khomeyni's regime because of this regime's hostility to communism and because the Soviet Union fears that the Shi'ite Islamic revolution may extend to the Muslim part of the Soviet Union. This is why the Soviets hastened to occupy Afghanistan. The two superpowers' position toward the Gulf war is made obvious in the signs indicating that the two parties to the conflict acquire their weapons from the same sources. This means that the two superpowers are not committed to any neutrality toward the war. Rather, weapons are sold to the two parties to the war by way of other circles that implement the two superpowers' wishes in the area.

[Question] Can it be said that the United States has used the resumption of Iraqi-U.S. relations as an element of pressure on Iraq to neutralize it in the Arab-Israeli conflict? The best proof of this is that Tariq 'Aziz stated in the wake of the resumption of relations that his country will not oppose any Palestinian-Jordanian settlement with Israel. He also gave the impression that Iraq is not a frontline state with Israel by virtue of the geographic distance and of the lack of common borders with Israel.

[Answer] This is a crucial question because Iraq states here that it is not a potential enemy of Israel. The statement by Tariq 'Aziz constitutes a basic departure from previous Iraqi positions epitomized by Iraq's position at the Baghdad summit. The statement even carries an implication of the possibility of future peace between Iraq and Israel. I believe that this position is what will tip the scales in favor of Iraq and against Iran in the future.

[Question] What can the two superpowers do vis-a-vis the deteriorating situation in Lebanon now that Israel has completed the first phase of its withdrawal, now that the security situation has exploded again with the internecine fighting between the Lebanese sects and now that Hafiz al-Asad has achieved all his political and military objectives there?

[Answer] Nothing, because the main problem is the failure so far of the sects to settle their disputes politically and because they have resorted to warring with each other to gain control of the areas evacuated by Israel instead of enabling the Lebanese national army to control these areas. Lebanon's political situation is still colored by the sectarian conflict that has exhausted Lebanon socially and economically. As for Syria, I wonder if Syria could have stayed in Lebanon if the Lebanese sects had agreed to amend the 1943 charter and if they had united in the face of any foreign presence on their land. Of course not.

The solution lies in concord between the sects and in reaching a political solution. This can come from only the Lebanese, not from others.

[Question] If we review two opposing approaches in the area--an American approach through strategic cooperation with Israel, a strong defense relationship with Saudi Arabia, cooperation with the Gulf Council member states and a special relationship with Egypt and a Soviet approach embodied in firm relations with Syria and Libya, a friendship and cooperation treaty with Yemen, good relations with Iraq and a gradual movement toward some Gulf countries, such as Kuwait--does such a review favor a close balance between them leading to stable relations between the area's countries?

[Answer] There is a fundamental point that must be clarified, namely that one of the mainstays determining the strength of the relationship binding one country with another is the degree of similarity between their political and social systems, even though this does not preclude the presence of balanced relations with other foreign countries even if their political systems are different. This is not confined to the political relations but goes beyond to economic relations and to the weapons supplies that enable any country to defend itself. These factors play a major role in shaping the quality and dimensions of the relationship. If we consider matters on the basis of this analysis, we explain the extent to which the Arab countries go in their relations with the two superpowers.

There is certainly a balance existing between the two superpowers at present. But this balance has not achieved any stability in the relations between the Arab countries themselves--countries that are now torn apart by disputes and conflicts. The examples are numerous and include the conflict between Morocco and POLISARIO in which Mauritania and Algeria are involved, the tensions between Libya and Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia, Syria and Jordan and Syria and Iraq. Consequently, I say that we will be greatly deluded if we think that the two superpowers hold the solution to our problems and to achieving stability for us. In the first and final analysis, the solution to our problems depends on us, on our strength and on the influence we have over the course of events.

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CSO: 4504/255

EGYPT

NPUG PAPER ON CAIRO'S SUPPORT FOR JORDANIAN-PLO AGREEMENT

Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 27 Feb 85 p 1

[Editorial: "Egyptian Government and Jordanian-Palestinian Agreement"]

[Text] Cairo's approval of and support for the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement have reaffirmed the fact that the Camp David accords have failed to find a solution to the Palestinian issue, that Cairo has abandoned the idea contained in the accords on the possibility of turning the issue into an issue solely of self-rule and that any solution must emanate (1) from the Palestinian legitimacy embodied in the resolutions of the Palestinian National Council, (2) from the Arab legitimacy embodied in the Arab summit resolutions, especially the Rabat and Fez summit resolutions and (3) from the international legitimacy embodied in the UN resolutions.

Cairo's support for the agreement, in its capacity as an initiator in settling the Palestinian issue, must come in accordance with the Palestinian interpretation of the provisions of this agreement and must bolster this interpretation, since the status of the PLO is not a subject of debate and the PLO is more qualified than any Arab regime, including the Jordanian regime, to speak in the name of the Palestinians.

Therefore, Cairo's support for the agreement must mean that Cairo stands firmly with the Palestinian people's right to their independent state and that the Palestinian people's decision to establish a confederal union with Jordan is a free decision reached in accordance with the Palestinian people's acknowledged right to self-determination, since the establishment of a Palestinian state meets not only a pan-Arab interest but an Egyptian national interest also.

Moreover, this support must carry the meaning that "solving all aspects of the Palestinian issue," as stated in the agreement, also includes ending the Israeli occupation of the Arab Jerusalem. This is a point on which Cairo in particular must be clear so that Israel may not use as an argument the phrase "solving all aspects of the Palestinian issue" contained in the Camp David accords, which disregard any solution to the Jerusalem issue.

Generally, the principle of "land for peace" must be taken to mean all the occupied Arab territories. The restoration of this land must be an indivisible issue because peace is an indivisible issue.

It must be also clear that the agreement's commitment to an international conference as a framework for negotiations is not a transient or marginal issue but a fundamental part of the agreement. Cairo is required to exert the utmost efforts with Washington to make it agree to the idea of the international conference. Cairo must not perform the role of arranging a meeting including Israel and a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, provided that the Palestinians be comprised of moderate elements chosen by 'Arafat, as President Mubarak said in an interview with THE NEW YORK TIMES.

However, the issue is primarily one of struggle, not diplomacy. Before relying on concluded agreements, a just settlement of the Palestinian issue must rely first on creating a real change in the area's balance of powers in favor of the Palestinian cause. This is an issue for which all the Arab forces are responsible. Arab solidarity, and first Palestinian solidarity and the Palestinian armed struggle, the Arabs' preparedness for a military confrontation and the Arabs' diversification of their weaponry sources and their non-reliance on U.S. and Western sources play a fundamental role in transforming any diplomatic movement into an influential force.

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CSO: 4504/253

EGYPT

PLANE INCIDENT REVEALS ARAB REJECTION OF ISRAEL

Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 24 Feb 85 p 5

[Editorial by Muhammad al-Hayawan: "A Word of Love"]

[Text] A simple incident... that can happen every day...but it has deep significance should the Israeli rulers realize it. But I do not think they will realize it because each of them has a long record of terrorism against the Arabs. Indeed, such a record is a pre-requisite for appointment to leadership positions in Israel.

The incident is the landing of an Egyptian plane with Arab passengers at an Israeli airport. This emergency landing was necessitated by a storm. There was not enough fuel and Cairo Airport was closed. The closest airport where the plane could land was in Israel. Israel tried everything to lure the Arab passengers into entering the airport lounge. It afforded them every courtesy and enticement. And, in true Israeli form, the enticement was done by a bunch of young girls, carefully chosen with some speaking Arabic. The natural reaction was a total Arab refusal. Not a single passenger went to the airport lounge. Even the airplane crew, who were forced to disembark to take care of certain matters, sat in a far corner of the airport lounge and refused to talk to the Israeli radio, press and TV.

Israel did not ask itself what prompted this Arab refusal. The answer is simple, if they will come to their senses. Israel has not changed its tactics or its ethics; it has not offered a single proof of good will and its desire for peace. Israel undertook the Dayr Yasin massacre. The massacres have not stopped, but rather have persisted as a method of rule and survival.

Israel needs 30 more years to be accepted by the Arabs. During this period, it needs to offer daily proof of her good intentions, that it wants peace, that it wants to coexist in the area. Israel, however, offers daily proof to the contrary.

The incident passed without any repurcussions, but its significance goes much deeper because it underscores the fact that Israel has not changed, that it is still using the same tactics with the Arab and is still amassing its huge aresenal.

Yet, some people still imagine that it can accept peace.

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CSO: 4504/248

EGYPT

MUBARAK MEETS NDP LEADERS, ANSWERS QUESTIONS

Cairo AKHIR SA'AH in Arabic 16 Jan 85 p 10

[Article by Suhayr al-Husayni: "Study in Practice and Democracy"]

[Text] The Monday meeting between the National Democratic Party [NDP] leaders and the prime minister, the ministers and responsible officials is nothing more than a lesson taught to the other parties about democracy and its correct practice. The meeting is also considered a pulsating model of the method of dialogue used within the ruling party and of the free discussions which are held between the ministers and the people's representatives. Attendance by President Husni Mubarak, the head of the party, at the latest weekly meeting is nothing more than a consolidation of this democratic practice and a confirmation of the freedom of dialogue through the questions asked and through the correct answers given.

What went on at the Monday meeting between President Mubarak and the NDP representatives and leaders? What were the problems which were discussed candidly, and which ideas did Mubarak raise through the dialogue?

AKHIR SA'AH was there, at the NDP headquarters, observing and registering the lively picture of the open dialogue.

At the beginning, President Mubarak sat among those present listening to oil minister 'Abd-al-Hadi Qandil, who continued his talk about the rationalization of energy, saying: "We must move within the potential available to us. But this does not signify that there is no oil in Egypt. However, the truth is that the quantities available at present are limited, and the figures are clear before our eyes. The quantity we keep in store is 4 billion barrels. Currently, we produce 340 million barrels a year for consumption. Therefore, a calculation shows us that the quantities now available will suffice us for 11 years.

"Oil prospecting is in progress and is being carried out seriously, and there is great hope that new quantities will be found. However, Egypt's future must be built on facts, not on expectations. Therefore, it is imperative that the citizens be alerted to the way that squandered oil energy can be rationalized. The government has begun diminishing its internal consumption at a rate of 20 percent. We will cease supplying energy to any side that exceeds

its quota. Furthermore, we have started computing the value of the energy consumption of the various sectors over the past 6 months, and we will cease supplying energy to those sectors which will be late in paying."

In commenting on the talk of the oil minister, President Mubarak said: "A monthly followup of the oil consumption of the various production and service sectors is imperative, and we should not wait for the year to end."

President Mubarak added: "It is incumbent upon us all to work for the future and to stay away from facile methods. Otherwise, we will have perpetrated the greatest crime against our children. It is imperative that the people be frankly told the facts so that they will share in shouldering the responsibility for the rationalization of consumption--not only of energy but also of everything connected with the main and strategic commodities, especially our consumption of wheat and of bread. The importation of wheat has become a difficult matter. I fear the time will come when we will have funds, but we will not find those who will be willing to give us these huge quantities of wheat."

President Mubarak said: "To the extent we can, we must bear in mind the insolvent classes. However, it is imperative that our decision-making method be characterized by a comprehensive national outlook. It is also imperative that this method depend on integrated studies, which will take into consideration the political, economic and social dimensions. It is also imperative that we stay away completely from making urgent and unstudied decisions."

#### Explaining Facts to People

President Mubarak then began answering the questions asked by the political club's members in all frankness and clarity, as the president has always been accustomed to do:

A member, namely Muhammad 'Awdah, wondered how subsidized wheat found its way to the black market in the governorates at a rate of 50 percent.

President Mubarak said: "These matters are known. It will take a short period, after which the black market will completely disappear. However, let us proceed step by step. We are working through comprehensive and integrated studies, encompassing all sides, not just one side."

The president added: "During my visit to West al-Nubariyah and the new communities, I was delighted with the agricultural development that has overtaken these desert areas. There I saw the new villages and the projects of the producing families, whose production has actually begun, I entered the premises of cooperative societies and I found that everything was available. People there are happy and delighted with working in a healthy, quiet atmosphere. I entered a bakery there. The bread is excellent because there is no way for wheat to find its way to the black market."

Fathi al-Bayyumi wondered: "Why, while we advocate the rationalization of energy, does the minister of information announce the opening of a third television channel this year?"

Minister of Information Safwat al-Sharif said: "Channel 3 does not conflict with the rationalization of energy, because a citizen views one channel at a time."

President Mubarak commented on these queries, saying: "This is our purpose behind these seminars: that you ask and that you, the people's representatives, learn the facts. However, your duty is to convey these facts to the people through the convening of seminars with the citizens in the various locations and districts, so that all the facts will be clear to the people and, thus, they will cooperate with us. These matters affect Egypt's future, and no one has the right to decide on them individually."

Dr Ahmad 'Umar wondered whether the amount of power fed to the Naja' Hammadi aluminum plant needs to be reconsidered, especially since we are talking about rationalizing energy?

President Mubarak said: "I am not a specialist. You must conduct a study, and I will implement everything in the study which is to Egypt's benefit, but on condition that your study of the matter will not be one-sided. It is imperative to conduct an overall national study from all economic, social and political perspectives."

President Mubarak added: "We have shelved the al-Qattarah Depression project because its cost is very high--and this is what the economic feasibility study has clarified. Furthermore, we have carried out a comprehensive study of the nuclear energy project. Our circumstances no longer tolerate any new mistakes or slippage. They have said that the United States and Russia have stopped building nuclear stations. However, we have found that the United States, the Soviet Union, France and Switzerland are still establishing nuclear stations. Nevertheless, we made the decision only following an ample and integrated study. It is incumbent upon you to clarify this decision to the people so that we will not leave them open to any tendentious viewpoints."

Muhammad Hamid Mahmud wondered: "Why don't we leave the choice of NDP secretaries in the governorates to the broad popular base?"

President Mubarak said: "I have thought of the method of elections for the choice of secretaries. However, this method might have some negative aspects. Some people who do not believe in the NDP's principles but who spend lavishly on the election campaign might win the election. Meanwhile, there may be good elements who do not have the material resources. Nevertheless, we do not impose NDP secretaries on the governorates and the districts. But we take into account the views of the vast majority and the agreement of their desires with what the leadership deems appropriate so that decisions will be made which will fulfill the party's general interests and achieve the broad popular base's desire. By so doing, we will have spared the party going to any excesses."

Salah al-Taruti wondered: "While we are in difficult economic conditions, why does the government not think of increasing telephone subscriptions, especially because we are in al-Sharqiyah, and despite this we feel the excellent service offered, whether in making calls within the governorate, or outside it?"

President Mubarak said: "There is no room for such talk at this time. It is imperative that we first finish improving the services extended by all the new exchanges throughout the republic. We appreciate our responsibility to the citizens."

President Mubarak then answered a question by Sa'd al-Din Wahbah about Egypt's foreign policy, saying:

"Foreign policy is ultimately geared to promoting our domestic conditions. In addition, our political moves are clear and declared, and there is nothing we would want to conceal from the people. Our stances are always clear and they are compatible with Egypt's weight and size in the Arab nation and on the African continent."

President Mubarak then dealt with Egypt's relationship with both superpowers. He focused on the pride which Egypt takes in the Egyptian-U.S. friendship. He emphasized that there are no U.S. bases in Ra's Banas, as has been published in some foreign newspapers.

The president concluded the dialogue, saying: "We are proud of our stances as Egyptians. We do not trade on our people's interests and we do not allow our sovereignty or dignity to be jeopardized."

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CSO: 4504/218

EGYPT

SHAYKH ABU ISMA'IL RESIGNATION FROM WAFD PARTY ANALYZED

Cairo AL-AHRAR in Arabic 28 Jan 85 p 8

[Article by Wahid Ghazi: "What Does Shaykh Salah's Resignation Mean"]

[Text] Wafdist deputy Shaykh Salah Abu Isma'il has resigned from the Wafd Party. Shaykh Abu Isma'il's resignation does not just mean the departure of a People's Assembly member from the party to which he belongs. It is much more than this. Let us begin the story at the beginning.

A number of members of the muslim Brotherhood, led by 'Umar al-Talmasani and Salah Abu Isma'il, tried to form a political party but the government turned them down on the grounds that the Egyptian parties law prohibits the formation of a party on a religious basis.

In the elections for the current People's Assembly, a number of Muslim Brotherhood members tried to nominate themselves as independents but the government turned them down because the election law stipulating nominations in lists does not permit the nomination of independents. This law is unprecedented in the world and it was devised by the previous government to block some elements, including the Muslim Brotherhood, from entering the People's Assembly. But the Muslim Brotherhood members have been able to enter the Assembly through the back door. They joined al-Wafd Party and ran in its name and on its lists after negotiations were conducted by Shaykh Salah Abu Isma'il with Fu'ad Siraj-al-Din.

Under the title of "The National Party's Night Schools," I wrote in this section of Al-AHRAR on 16 April 1984, more than a month before the elections were held:

"The nomination system based on the conditional partisan lists reminds me of the system of night schools that open their doors to receive the applications of adult students or of students who fail their examinations repeatedly and wish to pass the general high school examination because the law demands that an applicant for the examination be registered in a school. Before and after the student fills out the examination form and seals it with the school stamp, he has no connection with the school. The same goes for the candidates who have nominated themselves in political parties in whose principles they do not believe just so they may include their name on these parties' candidate lists. Before and after the elections, these candidates have no connection with the parties on whose lists they run in compliance with the existing lists law.

"Consequently, when the election results are announced, the government will be surprised to find some People's Assembly seats occupied by members who represent political currents for which the government has established the lists system so that it may block them out and it will be surprised to find that this lists system is what brings them into the Assembly. Thanks to the devised lists system, Egyptian political parties have been turned into 'transit parties.'"

More than 2 months after this article was published, the election results were announced and 58 Wafd candidates won, including 8 members of the Muslim Brotherhood, namely Shaykh Salah Abu Isma'il, Hasan al-Jamal, Shaykh Muhammad al-Batrawi, Muhammad al-Mismari, Hanafi Ramadan, Rizqah al-Balshi, Mahfuz Hilmi and Hasan Judah.

Last week, Shaykh Salah Abu Isma'il accused the Wafd Party of backing down on its demand for implementation of the Islamic Shari'a rules. This is the justification Shaykh Abu Isma'il used to tender his resignation.

I believe that Shaykh Salah Abut Isma'il's resignation represents the beginning of a split among the Muslim Brotherhood deputies representing the Wafd. This will become evident in the next few days. The shaykh's resignation came hours after the Administrative Law Court issued a decision in favor of the Muslim Brotherhood's right to publish Al-DA'WAH newspaper.

This shows that Salah Abu Isma'il's resignation at this particular time did not occur in a void. Rather, it occurred at a time when the Muslim Brotherhood no longer needed AL-WAFD newspaper, now the Brothers may publish on its pages what they write in their capacity as party members, since they now have their own paper in which to express their principles.

I believe that all the Brotherhood journalists now writing in AL-WAFD will leave it for AL-DA'WAH.

Thus, after the Brotherhood deputies' resignation from the Wafd and the publication of AL-DA'WAH, the Muslim Brotherhood will have returned, with its parliamentary group in the People's Assembly composed of the deputies who have broken away from the Wafd under the leadership of Shaykh Salah Abu Isma'il, with its organized presence outside the Assembly under the leadership of Shaykh 'Umar al-Talmasani and with its own newspaper, namely AL-DA'WAH.

With Salah Abu Isma'il's resignation, Egypt now has several political parties: the National Party, the Wafd Party, the Liberal Party, the Labor Party, the Grouping Party, al-Ummah Party and the Brotherhood party. Each of these political parties has its own newspaper, with another partisan newspaper, AL-DA'WAH, added to the six newspapers that already exist.

Of these seven parties, four are represented in the People's Assembly. They are, in the order of the number of votes they got: National, the Wafd, Brotherhood and Labor.

Of these four parties, three entered the People's Assembly through election and one, namely the Labor Party, entered through appointment!

I confess that I am happy with the new Brotherhood party, even though I am not a Brotherhood member, in that I rejoice at the Brotherhood's rise and I am not against al-Wafd in that I rejoice at the Brotherhood's split from this party. I am happy because the rise of the Brotherhood party, in spite of the political parties law and the presence of the Brotherhood in the People's Assembly despite the law concerning election by the conditional proportional list, means that the government's methods are unsound, as I had predicted they would be in the article I published in AL-AHRAR on 16 April 1984.

The laws which the government devises in a manner that conflicts with the nature of things always lead to the contrary of what the government wants. Unnatural preludes always lead to unnatural results. The government devised the conditional proportional list law to grant parliamentary seats to some people and to deny them to others. However, it turns out that those the government wanted to grant were denied and those the government wanted to deny were granted.

The Labor Party is one of the parties which the government had hoped would gain seats in the parliament so that it may gain strength. Thanks to the government's lists system, this party failed and the government was compelled to include it in the People's Assembly by appointment, thus weakening, instead of strengthening, it at the popular level.

The Muslim Brothers are among those the government sought to prevent from entering the parliament with its relative lists law. But as it turns out, the Brotherhood is the opposition party occupying the largest number of parliamentary seats after al-Wafd. Moreover, the Brotherhood now has a newspaper speaking in its name!

Had the government allowed matters to move according to their nature and had it allowed the elections to be held under the individual system which is compatible with the nature of life in Egypt and which had been practiced since the start of Egypt's parliamentary life, it would not have been surprised with the results which have produced the opposite of that which this government had sought. It would not have denied Egypt those great independent elements that were unable to run in the elections under the canopy of the conditional proportional lists law or that ran in the elections after changing their skin and declaring their accession to political parties in whose programs they did not believe.

What has been said about the election law applies to the other unnatural laws which the government issues to solve our problems only to find that these problems are becoming more complex, thanks to these government laws.

If the government had left the housing problem to the law of supply and demand and if it did not interfere with the laws concerning the relationship between landlord and tenant, the housing problem would be solved.

If the government had left the money market to the law of supply and demand and if it did not interfere with its laws, the economic problem would be solved.

The government has even interfered with the natural relationship between husband and wife to regulate it with personal status laws only to find that the number of husband-wife disputes is escalating.

But the Egyptian government always believes that it is more intelligent than all the other governments in the world because it is the only government that has discovered the solution to all problems, using statements one time and devising laws another.

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CSO: 4504/230

EGYPT

SLP LEADER DISCUSSES PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE ELECTIONS

Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 5 Feb 85 p 2

[Article by 'Isam Sulayman: "Ibrahim Shukri in Bani Suwayf: We Will Not Enter New Election Except on Condition That Voter Proves His Presence at Election Committee"]

[Text] Eng Ibrahim Shukri, the SLP [Socialist Labor Party] chairman, stated that the party will not enter into any future election except on condition that the necessary measures be taken to prove the voter's presence at the election committee, regardless of any other conditions and regardless of whether these conditions pertain to abolishing elections by the conditional proportional list, to reducing the percentage or to other aspects.

Shukri said: "I insist on this condition because proving the voter's presence means blocking the path in the face of election rigging and the possibility of bringing those who engage in rigging to account."

This was stated during the tour which Eng Ibrahim Shukri made in Bani Suwayf last Thursday morning. The tour began at 1100 when a party office was opened behind the ophthalmological hospital in Bani Suwayf. A discussion was also held with the party members on the current political issues.

Engineer Shukri asked party members to be models for the masses and to turn their efforts toward solving the chronic problems from which society suffers, such as those of illiteracy eradication, refresher lessons and sanitation.

The party also visited Bani Suwayf Bishopric where he expressed the SLP's good wishes on the occasions of Christmas and the Epiphany.

He also awarded the Ibrahim Shukri Cup to the Ashmant soccer team which defeated al-Maymun team in the finals. Eighteen soccer teams representing SLP youth in the governorate's various villages and districts took part in the tournament.

In the evening, Engineer Shukri held a political meeting in the movie theater of al-Nil Secondary School.

At this meeting, Engineer Shukri discussed the current economic situation and the big gap between what we export and what we import and the subsequent rise in prices.

He said: "This situation proves that there must be a complete and clear change in what every Egyptian does and what the government does."

He added that there has to be trust between the ruler and the people who work and produce and there should be no barriers between the ruler and the ruled.

Shukri also discussed the state of emergency, the dangers of this condition and the government's determination to have martial law declared.

He explained how the opposition can be kept away from the people in accordance with this state and how it demands that the opposition hold its meetings in closed places.

He said that all must unite to achieve the reform we seek.

Following this address, Eng Ibrahim Shukri answered the audience's questions, which centered on the party's third congress, the repairs to al-Husayn shrine, civil liberties and the return of the dawn visitors [security men arresting people in their homes at dawn].

'Abd-al-Hamid Barakat, the party's assistant general secretary and organization secretary, discussed the election guarantees that were demanded by party chairmen but not fulfilled.

He said that the ruling National Party does not use elections in selecting its cadres, so how could it believe that those sharing power with it must come by election?

He appealed to the youth to register their names in the election lists quickly and stressed the need for every voter to attend in person to cast his vote so that he may not give those wishing to engage in forgery the opportunity to do so.

Sa'd 'Abbud 'Abd-al-Wahid, the governorate secretary, spoke about Ibrahim Shukri, the struggler, and then about the problems in which the security agencies have immersed him, saying that most of these problems are superficial and summed up in the agencies' insistence that no welcome signs be raised by the party members to welcome the SLP chairman and the political conference the party decided to hold.

He said: "While preventing us from hanging these signs and even tearing down the signs already hung, the agencies permitted hanging numerous signs welcoming the minister of education upon his latest visit to Bani Suwayf. So why this discrimination between the opposition parties and the government party?"

Dr Faruq 'Abd-al-Razzaq had earlier spoken on behalf of al-Ummah Party. Muhammad 'Abd-al-Hamid Sami, the Liberal Party secretary general in Bani Suwayf, and Muhammad Ibrahim 'Uways, the SLP secretary, had also delivered their addresses earlier.

Zaki al-Sha-rawi, secretary of the SLP committee in al-Fishn, declared that Bani Suwayf Governorate clings to the SLP, despite what was done in the past elections.

Husayn Nuwayshi, the party's assistant secretary in al-Wasiti, said: "We all know what the ruling party's government has done in the elections and we must work for the coming phase so that we may regain our rights."

Ahmad Abu Karam, member of the Bani Suwayf district capital committee, expressed his wishes for the success of the political meeting and his hope that the meeting will emerge with beneficial results through the discussion with the party chairman.

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EGYPT

AL-HAMAMISI DISCUSSES PRESS RIGHTS, UNION ELECTIONS

Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 25 Feb 85 pp 60-62

[Interview with Jalal-al-Din al-Hamamisi by Sana' Qabil: "Jalal-al-Din al-Hamamisi: I Turned down Nomination at Last Moment So That Election Would Not Turn into Political Battle; Freedom of Press Can Pose No Danger to Government; There Isn't in World Such Thing as Partisan Press; Press Has Been Set Back Because It Has Succumbed and Has Been Tamed; Chief Editor Has Unlimited Powers over Reporter and Limited Powers over Columnist"]

[Text] Moments after my interview with Jalal-al-Din al-Hamamisi, he suddenly asked me: Can you publish these words?

I said confidently: Yes.

[Question] He made no comment, and neither did I. I then reminded him of my important question: You are accused of withdrawing from the Journalists Union election at a fatal moment, either for fear of failing or so as not to anger the government.

[Answer] To begin, I had not planned to enter the elections but old press personalities in prominent positions in the press contacted me from all directions and asked me to nominate myself for the post of union chairman.

I told them that I had gone through the experience 4 years ago and felt that the weight with which the regime came down on me put extreme pressure on the press workers and that I did not wish to go through the farce again so as not to intensify the pains of the journalists.

It was their opinion that such pressure would not be exerted. My opinion was that the only guarantee lay in refraining from putting pressure on the journalists to elect a certain individual. Shortly afterwards, these personalities contacted me again and said that they could not fulfill the promise because the National Democratic Party candidate had an enormous force backing him. At this point, the situation was overturned.

Then other colleagues in the Journalists Union's General Assembly, of whom I am proud, asked me the same thing. I did not turn down their request and told them that I would study the matter. But then I felt that even though this board base offered me a better chance of success, it sought to turn the battle into a political battle instead of a professional battle.

So as not to contradict myself, I turned down the request at the moment of election. I have never entered an election battle because of political thinking or as an opponent of the regime. Every journalist represents a national front and I do not wish the battle to turn into something denegrating to the journalism profession.

[Question] We hear the word "government" frequently. The government interfered, the government wants, the government has stated.... Who, precisely, is the government? Is it the minister, the prime minister or someone else?

[Answer] To be fair to the truth, I must say that the interference is limited so far as what we write is concerned. I happened to publish a column and then President Mubarak visited AL-AKHBAR and said to me: There is something between us for which I should reprove you. He then proceeded to reprove me gently over a certain issue. If the president had wished to be hostile, he could have rebuked me sternly or could have gotten angry and acted severely.

[Question] The other side of the above question: If the government does actually interfere, then why does it do so even though it asserts that the climate is free?

[Answer] The press has suffered a setback because it has succumbed and has been tamed and defeated. We used to hear such statements as "the consequences to the journalists will be grave if so and so is elected union chairman." The time has come for us to believe in the principle that says that the journalist must give and not expect to take. If we believe in this, nobody will be able to defeat us.

[Question] It is said that your tone has become restrained when speaking of the press and the government.

[Answer] There is a word about my tone in the early 1950's of which I am proud. At the time, AL-MUSAWWAR presented to al-'Aqqad 20 names about which he expressed his opinion.

This is what al'Aqqad wrote about me: "He is popular in a salon. But he is noble and does not take off his gloves while holding the pen, though he may take them off to shake hands with a friend or to duel an enemy. His critical pen and his praising pen move at the same pace, without going to excess or losing control. His store of good taste exceeds his store of paper but he never tackles his job without an adequate supply of both. His future is greater than his past, if he so wishes, and his share of tact and good taste guarantees him the success he wishes."

## World Doesn't Know Partisan Press

[Question] Let us turn to the freedom of the press, of the citizen and of society. Can there be conflict between them?

[Answer] They cannot be in conflict. I always say that there is a written contract between the press and the people stipulating that the press reflects the people's opinion and defends them and their problems and hardships, i.e., acts on the people's behalf in exercising part of their freedom.

If the journalist errs in exercising his freedom or if the people feel that the press does not defend them adequately, then it is certain that they will withdraw this authorization from the papers. It is wrong to say that there is a conflict between freedom of the press and an individual's freedom. The two complement each other.

[Question] Does freedom of the press pose a danger to the government?

[Answer] It can never pose a danger to the government. If a paper says that the government has made a mistake and if the government says and proves that it has not actually made a mistake, the paper cannot continue to make its allegation because the exercise of freedom, the government's defense of itself and the proof that it has not made a mistake enable it to win the round. But if there were no free press, then the mistake to which I cannot refer or of which I cannot accuse the government will continue to hang around the government's neck, even if in the form of rumors.

[Question] According to this definition, what is the power of the chief editor and what are the limits of his intervention against the journalist's freedom?

[Answer] The chief editor has extensive powers. His intervention in the reporter's work is fundamental because he must make sure that the reports he provides are correct, especially reports concerning a large sector of the masses and exposing the reporter to legal questions.

As for intervening in opinion, the chief editor is not at all entitled to do so because when columns are written and signed by the columnists, the matter becomes a matter of the writer's opinion and the chief editor is not entitled to intervene, either omitting or changing, unless there is legal accountability and provided the change is within very narrow limits.

But if the disagreement is over a political opinion and if this opinion does not agree with the newspaper's opinion, then the chief editor is not entitled to intervene. The newspaper's opinion is underlined by the editorial. For example, AL-AKHBAR newspaper has numerous opinions opposed to the government and expressed through certain columns. This explains why people are interested in reading this newspaper, since the reader finds a variety of opinions and viewpoints even though the newspaper is called a national newspaper. However, the current climate permits it to put the word national aside. If all the

national papers adopted this approach, there would be popular satisfaction with the press, something which is lacking at present. I hope that the current phase is a phase of development because the press is not in a dispute with the ruling party or the regime but serves the regime, the ruling party and the opposition.

[Question] What is the role of the partisan papers?

[Answer] There isn't in the entire world such a thing as a partisan paper, meaning here the Free World. But there are numerous papers inclined toward the opposition or the ruling party or papers that open their pages to all opinions. I believe that if our national papers embraced the policy of opening their hearts to all opinions, this would be beneficial to us and there would be no need for the partisan papers to resort to a kind of sensationalism to attract readers.

[Question] Do the partisan papers offer solutions to the problems raised?

[Answer] The opposition offers solutions in its programs, not in its newspapers. If it is said that the opposition seeks to topple the government, then this is its duty. How else can it implement its programs?

There is, of course, a shortcoming in the opposition press in terms of bringing up the faults from a partisan viewpoint and of emphasizing faults and delinquencies only. I do not believe that this is the sound path. This situation will change if these papers turn into dailies because they will have the opportunity to discuss the delinquencies and other things and to deal with more than one topic.

#### Rehabilitation

[Question] Let us return to the union elections. Is it enough for any candidate to wave promises of pensions, apartments and other services?

[Answer] I do not deny the journalist's right to have the ability to get a comfortable apartment. However, I say that a strong journalist and a strong union stand on an equal footing with the officials, without the pressures of a livelihood. According to what I have learned, the pension fund is always empty and the government leaves it empty so that we may extend our hands and say: "Our dinner comes from you, government."

[Question] Can these conditions improve with a strong union?

[Answer] Of course. Who defends my right when it is usurped by the chief editor? Has the union performed this role? This has never happened. Do the chief editors listen to the union when it moves? The chief editors say: We are the ones who make the union. Isn't this true? The government makes the union and, therefore, the chief editor is not entitled to tell it anything.

[Question] How can the press be rehabilitated and what is the rehabilitation to start with?

[Answer] What does rehabilitation mean? Should I say: Government, rehabilitate me, or should I organize myself so that this organization may lead to rehabilitation?

Rehabilitation means that if the journalist's dignity, profession, livelihood or freedom is undermined, the union says: No. If a strong union says no, its word will be influential. Many say that this is idealism. No, the dispute is not at all with the government. Why does the government interpret our words as a dispute. When I defend my dignity, does it mean that I am attacking the government? Just because I am demanding my right, does it mean that I am attacking the government? This is a matter of right and dignity. If the government wants the journalist to be dishonorable, then the matter is up to the journalists.

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CSO: 4504/253

EGYPT

ISRAEL'S LEBANESE POLICY MARKS RETURN OF HAWKS'

Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 23 Feb 85 p 6

[Editorial: "AL-JUMHURIYAH Says: Israel's Crimes in Lebanon and the Hawks' Return to Terrorism!"]

[Text] The Israeli occupation army in southern Lebanon has the unique distinction of being the only army in the world to wage war against small civilian villages, assaulting them with its armored vehicles and tanks and raiding them with its planes.

The barbarous suppressive attacks recently undertaken by Israeli occupation forces against the villages of southern Lebanon underscore the fact that the generals of the Israeli military establishment are trying to carry out their terrorist threats. Hence the return of Israeli armored vehicles to the areas they evacuated a few days ago to resume [their acts of] murder, terrorism and destruction.

Naturally, these aggressive moves reflect the fact that the hawks of Israel refuse to admit the failure of the strategy of expansion and armed aggression to which they have adhered for so long and have followed unwaveringly ever since Israel was created from nothing.

Nonetheless, the stepped-up campaigns waged by armed Israeli terrorism in Lebanon have yielded quite the opposite results. The Lebanese national resistance is continually on the rise, despite the death of dozens of people, the arrest of hundreds and the destruction of whole villages by tanks and helicopters.

The armed Lebanese national resistance will not retreat despite the arrests and interrogations being carried out by Israeli occupation forces against all the male inhabitants of some villages. It is as though the armed resistance grows with the escalation of Israeli suppression and barbarism.

This emphasizes a fact that must not be overlooked. The forced withdrawal the Israeli forces are currently undertaking in Lebanon resulted from a stepped-up Lebanese resistance and the Israeli forces' inability to bear the high material and bloody costs of their presence on Lebanese soil.

This forced withdrawal does not at all reflect a change in Israel's policies or intentions towards peace. The Israeli definition of peace remains the same. The peace that Israel wants is one that is based on Israeli forces' expansion and advance into whatever areas they choose, without any resistance from the Arab deterrent forces who are defending Lebanese territory to halt the aggression.

It was not surprising that former Israeli defense minister, Ari'el Sharon, should declare during the invasion of Lebanon that Israel's strategy had not been realized: The Arab nation had not been disarmed yet.

It appears that this is Israel's strategic dream, to commit aggression, to attack, to occupy and to expand without an Arab deterrent to stand in its way; also to have the Arabs put up with its terrorist crimes in occupied Arab territory in Lebanon, the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan as though they were a fact of life that is easy to justify!

In this framework, it is not strange that former Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin should announce that he was seriously thinking of returning to political life. It is the season for the return of the hawks who have been away from the terrorist arena!

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CSO: 4504/248

EGYPT

ABU ISMA'IL'S RESIGNATION FROM WAFD RAISES PROBLEMS

Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 19 Feb 85 p 5

[Editorial by Muhammad al-Hayawan: "A Word of Love"]

[Text] The resignation of Salah Abu Isma'il is a problem, but it can be solved; the slate election law provides the solution. The law is above all else. It is still in force and must be respected until it is amended.

The law says the Wafd Party has 58 seats in the People's Assembly because the votes it won in the elections say so. If a Wafd member dies, the next candidate on the slate replaces him so that the Wafd can maintain the number of seats.

Accordingly, if a Wafd member resigns, he leaves the assembly and is replaced by the next candidate on the slate. The same thing is true if the Wafd drops the membership of a member because, ultimately, the Wafd must maintain 58 members to represent the party in the assembly.

This applies to any other party because the slate law negates the value of the individual, giving all consideration to the slate. The law does not permit the presence of independents in the assembly.

I said the same thing about the Yasin Siraj-al-Din crisis and it distresses me to say it with regard to Shaykh Salah Abu Isam'il. But the law is the lord more deserving of respect because it is above all heads.

But this situation, for instance, does not apply to Dr Milad Hanna because he entered the assembly by appointment and does not represent a party. He is one of the 10 appointed members and can only leave by resignation because he does not belong to any slate and does not have an alternate candidate to replace him should he lose his party affiliation.

The law also imposes these restrictions on the Muslim Brothers who are members in the National Party. Should the Muslim Brotherhood party attain legitimacy, it could only enter the People's Assembly in the next elections. The Muslim Brotherhood members who are in the National

Party or the Wafd Party cannot quit either party to join the new party, because leaving these two parties means leaving the assembly, so that the National and Wafd Parties may maintain the number of seats determined by the elections.

The matter is not as clear to some of those who are debating the issues of the parties and the People's Assembly, even though the administrative judiciary has ruled exactly what we have said in a case related to the local councils. It said a member loses his membership if he resigns or is dropped from the party. The "party" here refers to the National Party because it monopolizes the local councils' seats by virtue of the absolute election law.

There is also the issue of the Wafd and the Brotherhood, but this is another matter.

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CSO: 4504/248

EGYPT

MUBARAK HONORS PRESS AT EDITORS' RETIREMENT

Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 27 Feb 85 p 12

[Editorial by Musin Muhammad: "From The Heart"]

[Text] Yesterday, I attended a quiet, simple celebration at the presidential palace in al-Qubbah to honor five leading journalists who were pensioned off in implementation of the press authority law that bans any journalist over 60 years of age from chairing the board of any national newspaper or being its chief editor.

This law, however, does not ban and cannot ban any journalist from writing until the last moment of his life.

President Mubarak was very clear in emphasizing the latter meaning.

He was keen to emphasize to everyone his eagerness to protect the press and honor it after he noticed that all retirees are honored except the journalist. Hence the idea to honor the journalist after retirement so that there will be no doubt, not even a shadow of a doubt, of an ulterior motive, for the retiree is now without power or influence in directing the press. He is totally free to follow any direction he chooses after being liberated of all restrictions save for his integrity to the profession.

President Mubarak said there was a search for those who should be honored, and raised an important question.

"Why not honor everyone, namely all those who leave leading positions for any reason?"

There were from the beginning many questions about the search: whom to honor and from what year to begin?

Finally, it was decided that the medals would go to those who have left a leading press position under the press authority law.

Five colleagues were chosen: Mrs Aminah al-Sa'id, Anis Mansur, Sabri Abu-al-Majd, Muhammad 'Abd-al-Jawad and Musa Sabri.

The tribute was not for these colleagues alone. It is a tribute to an entire profession and press work as a whole. It is an appreciation by the state and its president so that the new generation of journalists, the readers of the press and the families of journalists may know that their work is valued by the state and all.

The journalist gets a daily medal from his readers and the nation when he is true to his principles and when his motto is always to search for the facts for presentation to the people.

The simple celebration yesterday was to honor the long years in every journalist's life wasted among the printer's ink and the paper and his battle to get to the reader on time, at a time when the Egyptian press was antiquated due to a ban on importation, to a lack of money for newsprint and to the difficulty of matching the printing schedule to the schedule of the trains that carry the newspapers everywhere.

We hope that the tribute will include all those who served the profession a long time ago and were pensioned off before the enactment of the press law.

Indeed, we hope that the day the journalists' syndicate was created at the end of March will be a press holiday to honor those who take their first steps in journalism and those who have realized great hopes for the press and journalists.

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CSO: 4504/248

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EGYPT

## DEBATE OVER PERSONAL STATUS LAW EXAMINED

Cairo AKHIR SA'AH in Arabic 27 Feb 85 p 3

[Editorial: "Debate Goes On"]

[Text] Since Personal Status Law No 44 of 1979 was issued, there has been an ongoing debate over Articles 4/4 and 6/6 which entitle the wife having custody of children to receive the couple's housing and to get a divorce if her husband marries another woman. Because the articles of this law touch the life of every family, the debate has not been confined to the partisan lobbies or to the halls of the Shari'a courts but has extended itself to numerous television series and cinema movies that have used the theory that "the wife is entitled to the apartment" as material for numerous dramas and comedies. To contribute the enrichment of the debate on this issue which has preoccupied Egyptian public opinion, AKHIR SA'AH deems it fit to open wide the door of the debate through a series of objective reports now that one of the courts has referred one of the articles of this law to the Supreme Constitutional Court and now that the People's Assembly's Proposals Committee has approved a proposal to amend some of the articles of this law.

Because we have believed from the outset that this law was promulgated for the good and happiness of the family, we refuse to see the family's interest turned into a sphere for acts of political oneupmanship such as those practiced by some opposition factions which see in the allout attack on this law an attack on the government which issued it and a settling of old accounts. These factions have launched a fierce campaign on those who sponsored the law without even reading the provisions of the law and without understanding the explanatory memorandum attached to this law and who cling to the theory that some of the articles of this law are in conflict with the Islamic Shari'a.

This is why AKHIR SA'AH has consulted His Eminence Shaykh al-Baquri, a neutral and influential Islamic figure, who settled the issue when he declared that this law was approved at the time by a committee of the most prominent scholars of Islamic jurisprudence, namely Shaykh Bisar, the shaykh of al-Azhar at the time the law was issued; Shaykh Jad-al-Haqq, the mufti of Egypt and the present shaykh of al-Azhar; and Dr al-Nimr, the minister of religious trusts at the time, in addition to Counselor Ahmad Musa, the then minister of justice, and a committee from the Ministry of Justice. Despite this, we believe that the change in the laws is not a catastrophe. According to Shaykh al-Baquri, some

parts of the Koran invalidate each other, and the same occurs in the venerable Hadith. The law established by the Shari'a is not sacred, except in terms of what it achieves for society's interests and the people's happiness. If the people with the decision-making power agree on the need to change this law for the benefit of society, then why should it not be amended, especially in the case of a law such as the personal status law which has been subjected to more than one amendment? For example, when Egypt gained its independence from the Ottoman State, the personal status laws were derived, as was customary in the Ottoman State, from Abu Hanifah's creed. Because most of Egypt followed al-Maliki creed, some of the articles of these laws were amended on the basis of the interpretations of this creed.

Afterwards, changes were introduced into the Egyptian personal status law constantly and in a manner compatible with Egypt's circumstances and these were derived from the four creeds, not just one creed. When the latest amendment was introduced in 1979, the committee embraced the opinions of some creeds and not of others in submission to the principle of "transmitted principles" and to Egypt's special social circumstances.

If it now becomes evident from actual experience and application that some of the articles of this law, especially Articles 4/4 and 6/6, cause harm to some of the parties involved, then the principles of Islam urge constant interpretation and constant change as long as the change achieves the family's interest and the happiness of family members, particularly since the prophet always told his companions "you are better aware of the concerns of your world," and as long as this interpretation does not violate a clear provision and is not in conflict with the essence of the Shari'a. Despite this, Shaykh al-Baquri stated in the neutral testimony he made to AKHIR SA'AH this week that the committee which approved Article 6/6 concerning the wife's right to divorce when her husband marries another woman. He referred to an incident which happened to the prophet personally when 'Ali ibn Abu Talib asked for his permission to marry another wife in addition to Fatimah, the prophet's daughter. But the prophet refused to have "Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, and so and so, the daughter of so and so, live under the same roof." The prophet told 'Ali that if he wished to marry, then he should divorce Fatimah and then marry.

Despite this, the prophet said: "By God, I am not permitting the impermissible or prohibiting the permissible," meaning that this was a personal position he did not wish to impose on Muslims after him and a position the prophet took because the woman 'Ali wanted to marry was the daughter of Abu Jahl, the enemy of the Muslims. This means, first, that the committee which approved this article sought the help of an Islamic precedent and, second, that this precedent does not impose a legal rule on Muslims, does not permit the impermissible and does not prohibit the permissible. If the people with the power of decision, including jurists, the People's Assembly and the Consultative Council, find that the nation's interest lies in amending this law, then let it be amended. This is the Islamic rule. Wherever the nation's interest lies, there lies God's Shari'a. On the basis of this neutral starting point, AKHIR SA'AH proceeds with its objective debate and moves from the arena of Shaykh al-Baquri who has given his invaluable testimony on the pages of this magazine this week to head

next week to the arena of those who sponsored this law over which all this clamor has been aroused. The magazine will begin with Shaykh 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Nimr who will offer his testimony before the public and will recount with utter frankness the circumstances under which this law was drafted since he and his colleagues received it from the Ministry of Social Affairs and until it became a law implemented in the Shari'a courts. Shaykh al-Nimr will also recount some details concerning this law which have been made public for the first time. He will point out the articles he and his colleagues refused to approve and the articles they deemed fit to add so as to serve the public interest, at the same time relying on the opinions of numerous jurists from the four creeds. Perhaps what is most important in the interview is that the man declares with utter courage that even though he was one of the four men who approved this law in the public interest, he has no objection to amending it as long as the amendment looks after the public interest of Egyptian society and the Egyptian family. The debate goes on.

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CSO: 4504/252

15 April 1985

EGYPT

## SHAYKH AL-BAQURI EXPRESSES VIEWS ON PERSONAL STATUS LAW

Cairo AKHIR SA'AH in Arabic 27 Feb 85 pp 30-31

[Interview with Shaykh Ahmad al-Baquri by Sa'id Abu al-'Aynayn: "The Permissible and Impermissible in the Personal Status Law; Al-Baquri: I Tell Those Who Oppose Law: Prophet Did Not Permit Imam 'Ali To Marry Second Wife in Addition to Fatimah"]

[Text] Five years have passed since the promulgation of the personal status law and yet the talk about this law, the criticism directed at it and the demand that it be amended have not subsided.

Finally, the People's Assembly's Proposals Committee has approved the amendment bill. The proposed amendment says that marriage to a second woman does not justify divorce and that the right to housing is left to the judge's assessment.

This step comes at a time when the voices of some of those who participated in drafting the law have arisen to demand the amendment so as to fill the gaps exposed by its application.

His Eminence Shaykh al-Baquri is one of those who have declared their support for the law. What does he say now? Does he approve the amendment? Does he oppose it? Moreover, what is his position on Article 6 which opponents of the law say violates the Islamic Shari'a? Why has the shaykh proposed that the law be returned to the Islamic Research Academy so that it may say its word before the People's Assembly makes its decision?

It is not just the amendment of the personal status law issue with which our interview with Shaykh al-Baquri dealt. There has also been the issue of the veil and of what is behind this ever-growing phenomenon in Egyptian society.

Five years have passed since the promulgation of the new personal status law, namely Law No 44 of 1979. This period has been long enough to pass judgment on the law in light of experience and its application.

Talk about this law has never stopped since the time the law was issued.

There are those who fully support it, considering all its contents compatible with the public interest and in agreement with its legal provisions and with the spirit of the Shari'a.

And there are those who fully oppose it, since it fails to abide by the Shari'a dictates and initiates rulings that disagree with what is established by the Islamic Shari'a.

And there are those who demand that it be amended. Some of these are the men who took part in drafting the law. Those demanding amendment believe that gaps have emerged in its application and that, therefore, amendment is necessary to deal with these gaps.

The debate finally moved to the People's Assembly's Proposals Committee when committee member Mustafa Husayn submitted a bill to amend the law. The bill was approved and it was decided to refer it to the Assembly's Legislative Committee to study it and prepare a report on it for the People's Assembly.

This is a truly important news report and this is why the press published it in banner headlines on its front pages.

The bill for amendment of the personal status law states:

- Marriage to a second wife does not justify divorce.
- The right to the couple's housing is left up to the judge's assessment.

The bill's explanatory note criticizes the personal status law strongly, saying that Article 6 of this law which considers a husband's marriage to a second wife damaging to the first wife and entitles her to divorce represents a corrupt opinion that is in conflict with the words in God's book which says: "Marry as many as two, three or four wives if you wish." The rule in the Shari'a is to open the door for what is permissible so that people may not commit the impermissible. This is what the companions of the prophet did and they understood God's book, may He be praised, better than we do.

Concerning housing, the memorandum says that consigning the couple's home to the wife in custody of the children in an absolute manner encourages women to stray.

#### Law Is Not Sacred

We took all this to His Eminence Shaykh Ahmad al-Baquri to seek his opinion, especially since he has previously made statements saying that he supports the personal status law.

Shaykh al-Baquri said in his softspoken manner which carries calm and reassurance to the hearts of his audience:

Listen, sir. We believe that parts of the Koran invalidate each other and that parts of the noble prophet's Hadith also invalidate each other. The law established by the legislator, who is like you and me, is not sacred. If the people with the decision-making power agree on the basis for its amendment, then why should it not be amended?

To me, the people with the decision-making power are the people whom you have elected and who represent all sects, namely the People's Assembly and the Consultative Council. If the issue of the personal status law is presented to the People's Assembly and the Consultative Council in an enlightened manner and if they decide to amend it, then it is right to amend it.

Shaykh al-Baquri added: When the personal status law was drafted, it was drafted under certain circumstances. The most learned scholars in Islamic jurisprudence took part in drafting it. Al-Baquri also said:

The law was issued to secure the nation's interests. If the people with the power to decide believe that the nation's interest lies in amending the law, then the law must be amended. Why not?

[Question] It has been said that Article 4 concerning housing for children and their custodian encourages women to stray and that some wives with children have misused this article and threatened and insulted their husbands so that they may divorce them. The wives thus end up depriving their husbands of their housing.

[Answer] Every person in the People's Assembly or in the Consultative Council is a sincere trustee of the people's fate and interests. If this straying is actually proven, then the law must be amended because the objective is the nation's interest. If the nation's interest dictates that the housing be awarded to the husband, then why shouldn't it?

#### Mother Is More Entitled to Custodianship

Shaykh al-Baquri added: To us, the custodian, namely the mother, is more entitled. This is our opinion.

It is transmitted that in a conversation with his wife, Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali asked: Who is more entitled to the custodianship of children: the father or the mother? The two disagreed and so they went to the governor and the mother said: I am more entitled to the child than you are. My womb carried him, my breast fed him and my lap embraced him.

The husband said: I carried him before you did and delivered him before you did.

The wife answered in the governor's presence: You say that you carried him before I did? He said: Yes, do you deny it? She said: If you carried him, you did so lightly whereas I carried him with pain. If you delivered him, then you did so out of lust whereas I delivered him with pain. When he is sick, you sleep soundly whereas I stay awake with wide open eyes. Ziyad ibn Abu Sufyan, the governor, decided to award custodianship of the child to his mother, not his father.

Al-Baquri further added: Theer is an upright man in the People's Assembly, namely Rif'at al-Mahjub. In the Consultative Council, there is a man of principle whom I have known for a long time, namely Subhi 'Abd-al-Hakim. Both are educated men who are concerned with the people's interest. All our brothers in the People's Assembly and the Consultative Council may have their opinions and they are undoubtedly, in my assessment, the people with the power to decide. We will see what they decide and we will proceed according to what they decide.

#### Marriage to Second Wife Is Point of Disagreement

[Question] The amendment bill states that marrying a second wife is no justification for demanding a divorce and that Article 6 of the current law is in violation of what has been established by the Islamic Shari'a because it considers a husband's marriage to a second wife damaging to the first wife and gives this wife the right divorce.

[Answer] We can discuss this and we have our opinion on it. Imam 'Ali was married to Fatimah, Muhammad's daughter. People know no purer woman than Fatimah and know no man more faithful to God's prophet than Fatimah's husband.

Imam 'Ali wanted to marry another woman who was probably more pleasing to his heart than Fatimah. Whatever the circumstances, he wanted to marry another woman and he went to God's prophet to ask his permission to marry. God's prophet ascended the podium--meaning that he did not speak privately to 'Ali--and said: By God, I am not permitting the impermissible and not prohibiting the permissible. 'Ali ibn Abu Talib is asking my permission to marry so and so. By God, Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, shall not live with so and so, the daughter of so and so, under one roof. If he wishes to marry, then let him divorce Fatimah and marry.

Shaykh al-Baquri added: This is a Hadith from the prophet himself, may God's peace and prayers be upon him.

[Question] So you support the current law and you are not one of those demanding amendment?

[Answer] The Hadith I have just recounted is correct. As for the fact that the woman 'Ali wanted to marry was the daughter of ibn Jahl, the enemy of Islam, the fact that his first wife was Fatimah, the prophet's daughter, and the fact that what existed between the two was enough to cause grief, then what happens whenever a new wife is brought into the life of the old wife, there develops between them that which causes grief.

This means that there is nothing included in the law, so far as I know, for which the jurists have not sought causes and justifications.

If the people with the power to decide come now and find that the nation's interest lies in amending the law, then let the law be amended. This is the rule. Wherever the nation's interest lies, there lies God's Shari'a.

## Research Academy Is Umpire

Shaykh al-Baquri added: The truth is that I wanted to say that we in the Islamic Research Academy agreed a decade ago that every member of the Research Academy should express his opinion within, not outside, the academy so that it may not be said that one member seeking to become a hero may say outside the academy something different from what he says in the academy, with some people subsequently displaying fanatical support for such a member, whether rightly or wrongly. Therefore, I propose that the issue be again returned to the Islamic Research Academy so that it may say its word on it or may form a committee to examine the issue.

[Question] Before it is debated in the People's Assembly?

[Answer] Before it is debated in the People's Assembly. Meanwhile, the Research Academy can either take up and study the law or form a committee to deal with bolstering the law, responding to it or responding in its favor.

We will have thus taken the opinion of the popular decision-making power, embodied in the People's Assembly, and of the Islamic decision-making power, embodied in the Research Academy. This is, in my opinion, the soundest approach.

[Question] So, must the issue be returned to the Research Academy insofar as any demand pertaining to amendment of the personal status law is concerned?

[Answer] The basis is Islamic legislation. Islam is a religion of nature and it never denies the public interest. If they say, "where there is a stated provision, there lies God's Shari'a," then what they say is true. But it is also true that where the interest lies, there lies God's Shari'a.

## Light of Religion and World

[Question] Does the Research Academy offer opinions and advice or does it ultimately approve the law in its final form?

[Answer] When the Research Academy moves, it does so in light of the religion of Islam and the people with the decision-making power in the People's Assembly view matters in a secular light. Of course, before a law is drafted, it must be presented to the Research Academy after it is discussed in the People's Assembly so that it may be approved in its final form in light of the Koran and the Sunna.

[Question] And if the Academy has observations on the bill?

[Answer] It is returned to the People's Assembly with the observations. Therefore, there is no room for disagreement.

[Question] And what if the People's Assembly has a different opinion?

[Answer] Then the issue is subjected to argument and logic and the final say is in the hands of the people because the Research Academy will not pass a judgment for which there is no support in Islam.

Islamic Veil, Why?

[Question] The phenomenon of the veil is an interesting and ever-growing phenomenon in our society. It is not only the veil but also the face cover which conceals the eyes behind glasses and reveals nothing. With the extensive talk about this phenomenon, there are questions revolving around it.

Let us begin with the veil. Is it a duty for the Muslim woman to wear it and why is this so?

[Answer] Yes. The Hadith in which the prophet, may God's peace and prayers be upon him, speaks of the veil is true. One day, the prophet saw Asma', the daughter of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq and the mother of 'A'ishah, the mother of the faithful and the prophet's wife, wearing a robe revealing what is below it and he said to her: When a woman reaches puberty, it is not proper of her to show more than this, pointing to his face, and these, pointing to his hands.

Imam al-Qurtubi says in this respect that God's prophet held the middle of his arm with his hand to show how much a woman can reveal. A verse from al-Nur in the Koran says: "And they shall only reveal of their bodies no more than that which shows...." Thus, the Koran prohibits women to show more than what the prophet excluded, namely their faces and their arms up to the elbow.

So, this is the meaning of the veil.

There are other codes of behavior. The man must turn away his face and must not gaze at that which does not belong to him and the woman must lower her eyes and not gaze at that which is not permitted her.

Prophet's Women and Women of the Faithful

[Question] There are those who think that the veil means staying at home.

[Answer] The veil in the sense of staying at home and of not leaving it pertains to the prophet's wives only because God says regarding the prophet's wives: "Prophet's women, you are not like other women. If you fear God, then obey the word so that those who are sick in the heart may not desire you. Speak virtuously, stay in your homes, do not adorn yourselves like the women before Islam, perform your prayers, give your alms and obey God and his prophet."

This is what has been said as the prophet's women are concerned. As for the women of the faithful in general, they do not have to stay at home. They may go out dressed in an unrevealing and modest manner. A modest dress is a dress which reveals the woman's face and her arms up to the elbow, as al-Qurtubi says.

Another passage in a verse from al-Ahzab says: "O prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the wives of the faithful to draw their veils as it is likelier they will be known and not hurt."

There were then, as there are at all times and everywhere, libertine, youths who harassed women who left their homes in very short dresses, thinking that such women were slaves.

### Cover Has Its Story

[Question] What about the cover [al-niqab]?

[Answer] This is the face cover. An Islamic covering is supposed to conceal a woman's face. As for the face cover worn by women and the glasses with which they cover their eyes, this is an excess rejected by Islam. This has nothing to do with the veil but is rather an excess in understanding the concept of the veil.

[Question] And where has this cover come from, your eminence?

[Answer] From foreigners, either Turks or Persians, in the past who mistrusted women. As for the Arab woman, her kinsmen never mistrust her because her understanding, her character and her behavior are especially appreciated.

[Question] There are those who say that the face cover is for the extremely beautiful woman only.

[Answer] Listen, sir. What is the criterion of extreme charm and beauty? We have no criteria for beauty queens in order that we may say that this one is extremely beautiful and that one is not, this one is frightfully charming and that one is not. "There is somebody in the quarter to catch every fallen woman, and every unwanted woman has her day," [says the popular proverb]. A woman may not be appealing to you but is extremely youthful and appealing to another man who cannot sleep a wink without seeing her. These are not set criteria.

### Return to Religion

[Question] How does his eminence the shaykh explain the phenomenon of the veil and of its growing return to Egyptian society?

[Answer] It is the people's interest in godliness because people have looked at all the signs of civilization and culture surrounding them and have not been pleased with what they see. This is why they have turned to what is more pleasing to their hearts. There is a turning toward religion in all parts of the world at present because religion has comfort for the soul and reassurance for the conscience.

Shaykh al-Baquri added: In times of hardship and tribulation, religion is usually the haven and God the refuge.

EGYPT

MINISTER DISCUSSES WOMEN'S ISSUES, NEW SECRETARIAT

Cairo AKHIR SA'AH in Arabic 6 Mar 85 p 11

[Interview with Dr Amal 'Uthman, NDP women's secretary, by Hikmat 'Abd-al-Hakim: "NDP Women's Secretary Speaks: Eradicating Women's Illiteracy Comes First"; date and place not specified]

[Text] Even though nearly 30 years have passed since the Egyptian woman acquired full political rights in accordance with the 1956 constitution and since the emergence of women's organizations 2 years later, the Egyptian woman has generally refrained from participating in politics. This was the first fact encountered by Dr Amal 'Uthman, the NDP [National Democratic Party] new women's secretary. The question is: how will the new secretary build the future movement?

Within a period of no more than a month, which is all the time Dr Amal 'Uthman has spent so far in the secretariat, she has exerted ceaseless efforts to include numerous leaders and influential women from the People's Assembly, the Consultative Council, the universities and the media and she is still trying to include many new experts. How will the NDP's new Women's Secretariat be formed? What are the elements which will comprise it? What are the immediate and long-range objectives within whose framework the secretariat will move? We posed all these questions and others to Dr Amal 'Uthman, the minister of social insurance and social affairs and the NDP women's secretary.

[Question] At the outset, I want to ask about the experts who have joined the Women's Secretariat.

[Answer] Aminah al-Sa'id and Nabilah al-Abrashi from the Consultative Council and Karimah al-'Arusi, Fayidah Kamil, Rawiyah 'Atiyah, Suhayr Jalabnah, Thurayya Bayyumi, Dr Jihan Rushti and many others from the People's Assembly.

My selection of the parliamentarians was based on the fact that they are at the peak of political activity. But the secretariat also includes university professors who specialize in various fields and a number of women educators.

[Question] What are the general objectives of the Women's Secretariat as seen by Dr Amal 'Uthman and how will the secretariat work to enhance women's participation in political activity?

[Answer] There are general objectives to enhance women's standards, to foster their participation, to change the perceptions that obstruct their movements and to enlighten public opinion about women's basic issues within the framework of the existing plans and to encourage the various agencies to serve women. This is in addition to the special objectives connected with each of the secretariat's activities.

The first thing the secretariat will seek to achieve is to develop women's capabilities and to prepare women through education, training and enlightenment to increase their participation, to improve their standard of living, to bolster their status and to protect their rights, in addition to mobilizing women to participate effectively in shouldering development burdens, in decision making and in exerting efforts through discussions, debates and the raising of issues to form a public opinion that supports women's causes and respects their rights. We will also work to enhance women's participation in bolstering the mainstays of a peace founded on justice and international cooperation for the good of all and to achieve full coordination between the secretariat's efforts and the efforts of the agencies concerned with the implementation of economic, social and cultural development plans.

#### Eradicating Women's Illiteracy

[Question] There is no doubt that these objectives require enormous efforts and exhaustive activity.

[Answer] The secretariat will act in cooperation with the agencies concerned with development to expand the services aimed at developing women's capabilities and participation. It will focus on the long-term objectives, such as eradicating illiteracy and training women to gain the skills they need to enhance their lives. The secretariat will also focus on changing the negative habits and behavioral patterns that obstruct the development of society in general and the development of women in particular. The basis is to train women and to enhance their awareness. It is indubitable that enhancing awareness will prepare women for effective political participation that is beneficial to women, their families and their society.

[Question] How will the secretariat reach women everywhere so that they may benefit from these rights?

[Answer] We will try with all available means. The secretariat will formulate a complete plan to train the women leaders needed at all levels and it will issue regulations which will be conveyed to the secretariat members at all levels. The objective is to establish an effective communication channel to convey the secretariat leadership's requests and instructions to the members and to highlight the members' activities. Pamphlets will also be published to familiarize people with the secretariat's efforts and will be addressed to women in general. Local and national symposiums and seminars

will be organized to familiarize people with the secretariat's objectives, with its methods of action and with ways to participate in its various activities. Efforts will also be exerted through the media to change the negative image in which women are reflected, to project a new image compatible with what society expects of women and to shed light on honorable and exemplary women at all levels.

Secretariat Organization: How?

[Question] When will the secretariat's organizational structure be completed?

[Answer] Within 2 weeks after the plan is drawn up.

[Question] How will the organizational structure be?

[Answer] As a result of the constant meetings I have held, there are numerous proposals, the most important being the proposal that the secretariat membership be confined to the heads of branch committees, to members of the People's Assembly and the Consultative Council and, perhaps, to a number of advisers and experts. The bureau staff is comprised of the general secretary as chairwoman and the chairwomen of committees as members, in addition to the experts whose assistance the secretary decides to enlist.

The proposals also call for the formation of nine committees. One committee is the political committee, which will exert efforts to encourage women to participate in decision making and to overcome the state of indifference which causes women to be characterized as being negative toward the problems and issues that directly affect their lives. The committee will work through direct contact by way of all means of popular enlightenment to familiarize women with the rights and benefits available to them and with their duties. The committee will also exert efforts to organize women's participation in the various activities through the existing organizations and will encourage women to register their names in the electoral lists, to participate in local development projects and to supervise such projects.

The committee will provide the channels that offer women the opportunity to express their opinions, to interact with other women and to bring up their problems and propose the solutions. The more the solutions emanate from discussions within the groups concerned and the less they are imposed from above, the better their chances of success are. The political committee will also exert efforts to protect the rights women have gained and to defend them in the face of the forces seeking to undermine these rights.

The second committee is the culture and information committee, which acts in cooperation with the secretariat's other committees to achieve the secretariat's objectives, to familiarize them with these objectives and with the activities of the Women's Secretariat and to seek the assistance of the popular means of communication in presenting women's issues and in developing a public opinion supportive of these issues.

The third committee is the development committee, which draws up two plans: a long-range plan and a short-term plan to encourage the executive agencies to implement specific projects connected with the social, cultural and economic development of women, to continue to implement plans for the development of the leadership skills that will take part in mobilizing women through educational courses and through utilizing housewives to supervise sanitation in quarters and restaurants, to supervise the prices of goods and to insure that the vendors are healthy. The committee will also exert efforts to set up local economic projects with the participation of women to develop family resources according to the local environment's needs, such as rug industries, chicken farms and so forth, with such projects set up through the agencies of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

A legislative committee has also been proposed. This committee will gather legislation concerning women and the family, study this legislation and also study the bills that pertain to families and children and express its opinion on them.

This is in addition to the health committee, the family affairs committee, the education committee, the illiteracy eradication committee, the international cooperation committee and the organization and liaison committee.

#### Cultural and Dietary Illiteracy

[Question] What are the most important projects to be adopted by the Women's Secretariat?

[Answer] There are numerous projects that seek to solve women's and family problems. A study conducted by the National Research Center on rural children has proven that 90 percent of these children suffer from anemia. To solve this problem, the Nutrition Institute has been able to produce a certain kind of pastry that costs 3 piasters and that contains ingredients that eliminate anemia. Rural women must become familiar with this pastry and with how it is made and efforts must be made to change the rural dietary habits that cause anemia. What is important is to eliminate women's dietary illiteracy, in addition to their educational illiteracy.

[Question] How will the Women's Secretariat proceed to eradicate women's educational illiteracy?

[Answer] Through our general objectives as a party, it has been agreed to put the emphasis on a single project and to make concerted efforts to implement this project, in addition to the other regular efforts. This is the project to eradicate illiteracy as the primary and fundamental problem. The project calls for selecting a village or a quarter, depending on the conditions of the various governorates, to conduct a prominent pioneer experiment.

The minister of education has stated that the Scientific Research Academy has surveyed all the services available at the governorate level, whatever the nature of these services, so that we may know the village services and what services the village lacks in which spheres.

We will also prepare a working paper to act in light of this survey in cooperation with the executive agencies. All the agencies will act in unison to turn the village into a model village. It has been agreed with the Craftsmen Agency and with the Village Development Agency that we cooperate in the selected villages so that we may proceed with all our weight, finish our projects in these villages and follow up on the projects immediately. Our task as a women's sector becomes the task of following up on and solving the problems and determining what the obstacles are and then eliminating them so that we may move on to other villages in order that the experiment may be tangible and clear and that the masses may see what the secretariat is accomplishing and may participate with us in all the activities so that we may become the refuge to which they resort to solve their problems and to obtain services.

[Question] It is a fact that women's political organizations emerged in 1958, i.e., 2 years after women obtained their political rights in 1956. Thirty years later, women still refrain from political activity. Is this due to the fact that women are mothers or due to the political system itself?

[Answer] A woman shoulders enormous responsibilities inside and outside the home and she may be unaware of the benefits she can reap from joining the political organizations. The organization has to bring these gains closer to women. If we go to the villages and try to persuade women to learn to read and write, they will show no interest unless they feel that there is an immediate material benefit in learning, such as when they are taught sewing and are included in the productive-family projects and the food security projects. Through such services, we can teach the peasant women to read and write.

The minister's and secretary's statements thus make clear the role which the Women's Secretariat will play in solving women's problems and, consequently, family problems and in enabling women to know their rights, to participate in political activity and in decision making and to become a force capable of shaping public opinion on the issues concerning women.

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EGYPT

#### OFFICIALS DISCUSS TAX EVASION, VIEW SOLUTIONS

Cairo AKHIR SA'AH in Arabic 16 Jan 85 pp 18, 19

[Article: "Tax Evasion; What Is the Solution?"]

[Text] Preparations have begun for the season of the submission of returns for the commercial and industrial profits tax, for the free trades tax and for the general revenue tax. Furthermore, 31 December was the deadline for the settlement of delayed taxes without the payment of the 16 percent delay penalty, on the understanding that penalties will be imposed after this deadline expires.

It is enough for us to know that well over 1 billion pounds is lost by the state treasury yearly as a result of tax evasion alone, while the state general budget this year, 1984-85, registered more than 1.2 billion pounds in net deficit.

Where are all these millions lost? Who is responsible for their loss? Is this loss due to the existing legislation, to the tax authority apparatus or to the taxpayers, who think up methods of evasion? What are the real complaints of the taxpayers?

AKHIR SA'AH discusses these subjects through a specific query: How can disengagement be implemented between taxpayers and taxes?

We might not need to repeat that social justice does not depend on taxes alone; there are other means. However, we deal with taxes as a part which has its importance and extreme influence on the movement of life and people.

The question which arises is: Is the taxation system now in force in Egypt compatible with the declared objective of Egyptian policy, which can be summed up in increasing production and in [the principle] that Egypt is built only by its sons? Is the apparatus which does this delicate work suitable for continuing to do it, or does it need to be developed? Do the taxpayers submit tax returns showing their real revenues and profits? What is the number of evaders? What are the sums lost by the state treasury as a result of tax evasion operations? What are the means for combating tax evasions and how can they be consolidated?

Before entering into details, the payment of tax is basically a question of "consciousness." Whenever consciousness increases, tax evasion decreases. When a citizen, or a taxpayer, becomes conscious that the taxes which he pays will revert to him in the form of services and utilities, the matter assumes another dimension.

While opening the taxation file, it is imperative that we note that, yearly, as an important source has mentioned, the state loses well over 1 billion pounds! Naturally, the evaders are not people with fixed or limited income, because these [latter] are the ones who pay direct and indirect taxes most regularly.

With regard to direct taxes, we find that people with fixed incomes, who usually are employees and workers of the government and of the public sector, constitute the main taxpayers from whom the proceeds of the taxes paid on wages and salaries derives, because taxes are deducted at the source. It is also an established fact that the largest part of the taxpayers, who pay general taxes on revenue, are also government and public sector employees.

Furthermore, people with limited incomes, whose large number represents the great majority, are the ones who feed the state general treasury with the largest part of the total sum of the indirect taxes imposed on commodities and consumer services.

#### Confronting Evasion? How?

But the question is: How does the state confront evasion operations? Which organ carries out this confrontation?

AKHIR SA'AH has met the official in charge of the agency for combating tax evasion.

Salah Hilmi, head of the Central Department for Combating Tax Evasion, says: Our work is based on cooperating with the taxpayers, answering their queries and assisting them in the way of discharging their tax paying duty. However, owing to the nonexistence of sufficient tax consciousness, taxpayers are accustomed to creating all methods of tax evasion methods by preparing more than one book [of accounts], or by filing tax returns reflecting lesser amounts than the real profits. These are the instances for which the law prescribes penalties of 7-years imprisonment and a cash fine.

The prison penalty began in 1978. Before this date, tax evasion operations were regarded as nothing more than a misdemeanor. There is a transitional period, during which the lawmaker allows a reconciliation to take place between the authority and the taxpayer. Reconciliation is implemented through the evader paying the fine without going to jail. At this time, reconciliation exists and it has not been cancelled. It takes place at the authority's administrative department. In other words, a taxpayer who is proved to have evaded payment for the first time is excused. However, if evasion is proved against him for the second time, then he is punished.

[Question] What are the methods used by the [tax evasion] combat agency in pinpointing evaders?

[Answer] There are many methods. However, our work is based on investigation and evidence. By following [certain] activities, it is proved that those who practice them do not discharge their tax duty--and the required investigations are held into these activities and into all the established evidence and proofs of the dimensions of the evader's activities. Permission is then obtained from the prosecution--in accordance with the information about the second time, after which the "client" is taken by surprise and stock is taken of his books and invoices. If the investigation proves to be true, a suit is brought against the taxpayer and the memorandum of his excellency the minister is presented for the grant of a permit to file a lawsuit at court and, at this point, our work ends and it is assumed by the prosecution.

[Question] Some people say that the more the activities of a taxpayer increase, the greater is his opportunity for evading the payment of tax?

[Answer] This depends on the person of the taxpayer. If he is honest, he settles his dues to the state and he reports accurately the revenues of his activities and profits. It may be that evasion is second nature to a small grocer, who does not want to pay anything--and this has no connection with large or small scale activities. But the nature of our work is that we investigate the major evading taxpayers, because it is more worthwhile seizing one evader with large scale activities than seizing ten evaders with small scale activities.

[Question] What is the number of the tax evading millionaires?

[Answer] The capital of most millionaires, or of those who manage major projects, does not exceed a few thousand [pounds]. However, the size of their projects exceeds millions. For instance, if we try to compute the capital of Tawfiq 'Abd-al-Hayy, it is impossible for us to call him a millionaire. However, he obtained a loan amounting to 25 million pounds from several banks. He used the loan to set up projects and then escaped. What usually happens is that such major projects are investment projects which are tax-exempt for a period of 5 years as from the date of their implementation with the approval of the Investments Authority.

Some 650 Cases

[Question] What is the average monthly count of the [number of] evaders?

[Answer] The fact that our work is connected with pursuing major evaders does not link performance to quantity. However, I can say that in the period from 1982 to 1984, 650 cases of tax evasion were counted. What makes the task difficult is that there is, for instance, a taxpayer working in dividing land, and the authority knows nothing about him. This requires greater efforts. This is the opposite of the taxpayer who deals with the Ministry Economy in imports. It is very easy to reach this taxpayer.

Additionally, the evidence about evasion must be categorical. Here the situation differs. Therefore, the [combat] organ is not required to achieve specific averages.

[Question] Has not the time come for ending the reconciliation stipulated by the transitional period, especially because this makes the law lose its reverence, since the law is strict on the one hand and lax on the other?

[Answer] Reconciliation in itself is proof of conviction of evasion and this is an admission of the charge by the taxpayer. Additionally, reconciliation saves time spent on court attendance, especially because court cases are time consuming, but reconciliation takes place with the ministry's approval. It is also enough for us to realize that a fine is a criminal penalty.

#### Loopholes in the Law

Mahmud Mas'ud, a tax commissioners, says: There is a contradiction in the legislation. The law gives the taxpayer the right to implement an investment project alongside his original project. This investment project is tax-exempt for 5 years. Consequently, it is possible for the taxpayer to file tax returns and to place all his profits under the canopy of the investment project, which is tax exempt, and, subsequently, one cannot collect taxes from him.

It is enough for us to know that, since 1936 up to this time, there has not been in Egypt even one defendant accused of tax evasion, or one person whom it might be possible to accuse or convict of tax evasions, because the law has given taxpayers the right to be reconciled with the state. Subsequently, the incident and the suit brought against the taxpayer who had been seized are dropped. Therefore, the law is not a deterrent in the real sense, and this is why manipulation of tax returns and the lack of seriousness in the preparation of [account] books arise. Additionally, the taxpayers who own major projects have an organ of accountants who organize their activities for them and, in this case, manipulation is contrived and difficult to discover.

Another tax commissioner says: We are in need of adequate protection, be it material protection through salary increases, or the provision of safety from accusations of bribery.

#### Unjust Activities

All these things are known. However, it is indeed surprising that there is no map for the distribution of the national revenue and wealth in Egypt. How could we speak of a just taxation system in the absence of a precise conception of the form and distribution of the national revenue and wealth? This looks more like the attempt of an illiterate man to read, while he initially does not know the alphabet!

Undoubtedly, there are people who carry out many activities, but who keep their names out of the files of the tax authority, and who do their work and make profits, such as brokerage, tinsmithing workshops, craftsmen, car traders

and land titleholders, who sell lands at astronomical prices without settling the taxes due on these lands. There are many, diverse and far-reaching activities and it is imperative for the authority's activity to reach out for them.

#### One Billion Pounds Lost

Dr 'Ali Lutfi, former finance minister, has his views on this important issue. He says: The phenomenon [of the evasion] of taxes exists in many countries of the world. However, the extent of its spread differs from one country to another. The serious aspect, so far as Egypt is concerned, is that tax evasion is spread on a large scale, while the state general budget suffers from a large deficit. According to my estimates, the total sum lost as a result of tax evasion in Egypt is not less than 1 billion pounds yearly.

One should note that there are two kinds of tax evasion: total evasion and partial evasion. Total tax evasion signifies that a person carries out economic activity and achieves profits, but does not file tax returns and, consequently, he does not pay tax. In other words, the tax authority knows nothing about him. Partial evasion means that a taxpayer has a tax card and files tax returns, but he conceals some of his revenues, or exaggerates his expenses, so that he will evade paying part of the tax due by him.

[Question] How can the phenomenon of tax evasion be eliminated?

[Answer] To eliminate tax evasion it is possible to introduce some measures and pursue some policies which can be summed up as follows:

Making proper use of government revenues, so that we will convince the citizens to pay the taxes due by them. If the citizens notice the existence of squandering or irregularities in government spending, then this, naturally, constitutes a motive for tax evasion.

Spreading tax consciousness among the citizens through all means, such as radio and television, the press and other media, on condition that the method of preaching and guidance is not used, but that indirect methods are used. For instance, it is possible to place some signboards on important utilities, such as bridges, in which we state that this achievement was made by means of the proceeds of the taxes paid by the citizens. At the same time, this method induces a citizen to preserve public property.

Determining the tax community on the ground to eliminate the phenomenon of total evasion, to which we have referred, and this is the process which began in 1979, when I was minister of finance. However, regrettably, this process stopped after this date.

Expanding the system of deductions at source, because it has transpired that this system is the best means for pinpointing the various activities and, consequently, eliminating evasion.

Devoting interest to the human factor at the Tax Authority by increasing the numbers of tax commissioners, because these commissioners are now assigned

with work beyond their potential, which makes them fail to scrutinize the work, the inspection and the assessment. Furthermore, attention must be devoted to training, while the system of progressive incentives must be employed, that is, incentives should be increased whenever proceeds increase, on condition that the assessment of taxes is not exaggerated.

Developing the taxation apparatus with regard to buildings and places, and providing places affording the reception of taxpayers and holding discussions with them in full secrecy.

We place these views before the officials in charge of the tax apparatus and the Finance Ministry to remedy this serious phenomenon which endangers our national economy and social peace.

#### Taxes Not Paid By 99 Percent

Incredible figures have come to light in an important report on taxes in Egypt. However, regrettably, this is a fact. The report includes:

The rate of taxpayers is 1.3 percent. This signifies that 98.7 percent of the people have a monthly income lower than 160 pounds--the limit of tax exemption.

The number of taxpayers on the general revenue tax amounts to approximately 152,945 taxpayers, while the number of those working for the state is 12,096,400 individuals.

The report also states that, over the past 10 years, the state lost an amount valued at 15 billion pounds because of tax evasion. It also becomes clear that 71 percent of commercial profits taxpayers and 65 percent on noncommercial crafts taxpayers have not filed returns on their profits, and that as a result of the taxpayers' misleading the tax authority, 57 percent of commercial profits taxpayers and 31 percent of noncommercial profits taxpayers are under the exemption limit. In other words, well over half of Egypt's merchants and one third of the intelligentsia working in the free trades, namely, accountants, lawyers, engineers and doctors make monthly profits of less than 80 pounds--and this is impossible for any mind or logic to accept.

As the report says, there are many tax evasion methods, with the most important being:

Those whose names are not listed in the tax registers because their activity has no apparent form, such as brokers, land speculators, narcotics traffickers and the owners of furnished apartments. These persons cannot be pinpointed, except through the traditional police methods, or through anonymous reporting.

The second picture: an individual keeping his fortune away from the legal status of taxes by distributing it among the members of his family.

This is in addition to those who have become rich by illegal methods and who, naturally, do not file truthful declarations of the size of their fortune.

15 April 1985

EGYPT

## EDITORIAL DISCUSSES CAIRO PROBLEMS, SOLUTIONS

Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 25 Jan 85 p 8

[Editorial by Dr Yahya al-Jamal: "Cairo Cries Out!"]

[Text] No special relationship binds Yusuf Abu Talib, the Cairo governor, and me. However, when I meet him at a social function, I see deep satisfaction on his face reflecting a clear psychological reassurance. I invoke God to keep the governor satisfied, despite all the problems he suffers from and faces in his capacity as governor of this delicate and burdened city called Cairo.

Notwithstanding travels, tours and the numerous cities that I have seen in the East and West, Cairo has come to be distinguished from other large cities because of the enormous size of its problems. I do not think that anyone needs to hear a fresh enumeration of Cairo's problems, such as traffic congestion, sewers, torn-up streets, pollution, crowding and other problems about which we have heard and about which we hear daily and which are no secret to any of us, regardless of our stances.

Nor do I think that any of these problems is a secret to the Cairo governor. I feel and believe that the man is serious and lives the problems of his city every moment of the day. Nor do I think that my words will add anything new to all that has been said. However, the direct incentive for writing about the subject is that I found myself, for one reason or another and at noon one day, in the al-Mubtadiyan area, as if I had lost my way in the welter of the roaring sea of cars, with sirens being sounded mercilessly--and I indeed felt that Cairo cried out!

In this state of affairs, I went up to one of the upper stories of a new building. I looked at Cairo from that altitude and I again felt that Cairo cried in another way. Imagine a group of musicians, each one of them carrying an instrument completely different from the ones carried by the others, and each musician playing a tune discordant with the tunes played by the other musicians, with the least difference of each tune not just being discordant but also different in its very musical principles. Imagine one musician playing a tune of Western classical music, another playing Turkish tunes, another playing Arabic tunes and yet another playing a tune discordant with all the other tunes, such as a tune coming from deep in the African continent or from the peaks of the Himalayas! I saw the buildings of Cairo clashing to this extent, when I viewed it from this altitude. Again, as I have said, I felt that Cairo cried.

I am not one of those who imagines that it is the duty of the government organs alone to resolve Cairo's problems. I firmly believe that we, the citizens, shoulder a responsibility for most of Cairo's problems, we as Cairo residents, whether governors or governed. Each of us acts as though he were the only one in Cairo--and this is the cause of many of Cairo's problems. If everyone acts the way he wants the others to act, many things will improve.

The minor mistakes--minor in the eyes of those who make them--accumulate into mountains of mistakes. A car owner double-parks--nay, he might be forced to do this. But is he compelled to lock the car so that no one can move it and so that there will be no solution for those who want to leave in their cars, and who had parked in a correct manner, other than waiting for the wrongdoer until such time which, only God knows, he must break open the car or ask for help from the police? I am not saying all these things as suppositions. I have witnessed such things several times, the last of which was also witnessed by foreign guests, who saw this strange sight, I do not think that the Cairo Governorate is responsible for this disgraceful behavior, which is frequently repeated and whose source is the many people who do things but who do not think of others as they act. What I want to say is human nature has to do to a large extent with the magnification of Cairo's problems. What I also want to say is that if Cairo residents adhere to a kind of civilized behavior, they will themselves be able to avert, or at least to alleviate, many of their troubles in their delicate and burdened city, as I have already said.

However, Cairo's problems are much greater than this.

Mere civilized conduct by Cairo residents will be of no avail to Cairo's problems. Nevertheless, there is more than one solution to every problem. I believe that his excellency the Cairo governor knows that a conference was held at the beginning of 1975, and it was dedicated to a study of Cairo's problems. It was a scientific conference, not an exercise in rhetoric. Cairo's problems, and many solutions, were raised at this conference.

I call on his excellency the governor to ask for the research and studies carried out by this conference, because, overall, they are serious studies. It may be that the governor will personally scrutinize these studies or that he will do this with the assistance of some of his aides who appreciate responsibility. It will then be up to the governor to determine the extent of the seriousness, or nonseriousness, of these studies. I call on his excellency to review the recommendations which were passed at the conclusion of this conference to find whether any of them has been implemented. Furthermore he will also determine whether nonimplementation is due to the impossibility of implementing the recommendations themselves, or is due to the fact that we do not take our business seriously or do not pluck up enough courage to face people with whatever we should face them with because our organs are unable to implement these recommendations, or whether it is due to other reasons. What is important is that it is better not to let scientific efforts, like the ones which were deployed, to be squandered. It may be that these efforts were incomplete; this is possible. We must work to complete them. But it may be that we all agree that Cairo cannot be left just as it is--in its present condition.

Some 10 years ago, I read an article in the French newspaper LE MONDE which spoke of Cairo, of how, in the forties, it compared with London and Paris and of how at the time the writer wrote his article, Cairo compared with Indian cities. And this article was written 10 years ago, before Cairo's problems became aggravated the way they are at present.

Then, should we not look at things from a future perspective? Should we not think of Cairo 20 years from now, half a century from now, a century from now and so on? Or shall we content ourselves with the policy of extinguishing the fire only?

I know that we cherish Cairo and that the heritage of ancient Cairo is a kind of thing which cannot be offset. I know all this and I even feel it deeply. However, all this is one thing, and the necessities of life another. The necessities of life require us to think of the future of Cairo in its capacity as the capital of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Is it still suitable for playing this role, or is it imperative to look for a substitute for the ancient city which time has burdened with its weight?

Cairo will always remain a landmark of Arab and Islamic history. But for Cairo to survive, it needs a great deal of surgery as well as colossal efforts. And the question remains: can Cairo bear the burden of being a capital, or is it a must to think of a modern Cairo, beside the historic Cairo?

International universities now teach a science called "futurology"!

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CSO: 4504/218

EGYPT

CLERICS DISCUSS BAHAI ARRESTS, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Cairo UKTUBAR in Arabic 10 Mar 85 pp 17-20

[Article: "Baha'ism, Faith and Freedom; Week's Question in Wake of Arrest of Baha'i Organization: Does Any Egyptian Have Right To Embrace Whatever He Believes?"]

[Text] Does any Egyptian have the right to embrace or believe in whatever he wants?

This question is raised by the case of the Baha'i organization whose members, totaling 50 in number, were arrested recently and from whom a large collection of books, papers and documents containing their philosophy and principles were seized.

If Shi'ism is a creed in which some Muslims believe and to which they belong, Baha'ism is not one because it is neither a sect nor a creed associated with one of the three divine religions. Baha'ism, as Baha'is describe it, is a religion independent of all other religions.

Given the theory of freedom which is constantly raised as a slogan, in trying to confront these beliefs, the question becomes: does any Egyptian have the right to embrace whatever he believes?

UKTUBAR's file on the issue offers the opinions of four prominent Egyptian religious scholars on the issue, namely His Eminence Shaykh Jad-al-Haqq 'Ali Jad-al-Haqq, the shaykh of al-Azhar; His Eminence Shaykh 'Abd-al-Latif Hamzah, the mufti of Egypt; His Eminence Dr 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Nimr, a prominent religious scholar; and His Eminence Dr al-Husayni Hashim, the deputy president of al-Azhar. Moreover, the file includes the story of Baha'ism and the opinion of Maj Gen Ahmad Rushdi, the minister of interior, on the reasons leading to the recent assault on the Baha'i group in Egypt.

Story of Baha'ism in Egypt

Baha'ism first appeared in Iran in 1844 under the aegis of 'Ali Muhammad Muhammad al-Shirazi, who was inclined to study creeds and toward asceticism and worship to the point that he would stand bare-headed on rooftops and under the sun for long hours. He got so involved with transfiguration and

with making talismans that he became bewildered and weakened and his uncle had to send him to Karbala' to recuperate.

During his stay in Karbala', he studied with some of the ulema and the religious brotherhoods there and then returned to his home town (Shiraz) and began to teach at mosques. Some people followed him and he then devised his heresy in 1844, calling himself the gate [al-bab]. In launching his call and using this name, al-Shirazi utilized some principles of the Twelver Shi'ite sect, which believes that its 12th imam disappeared in a tunnel, that he will reappear some day and that throughout the period of the imam's absence there will be a liaison between himself and his sect called "the gate." Al-Shirazi appropriated this name for himself and even claimed that he was a prophet receiving divine revelation, that his mission was to renew religion and that Islam, the final religion, and the religions before it were no longer fit for the age. He claimed that this is why God sent him and revealed to him a new message different from and negating all the previous messages. He thus wrote a book which he called "Al-Bayan" and which he claimed had been revealed to him. This book negates many of Islam's dictates, making the fast last only 19 days from sunrise to sunset and always falling in the spring (from 2-20 March), thus coinciding with the Persian Nowruz feast. These teachings angered the people, the ulema and the government and so the governor of Tabriz ordered that al-Shirazi be executed after a debate he had with the chief ulema. He was executed in July 1850 at the age of 31. His body was dragged around the streets and then dumped in a ravine abounding with predators but his followers took the body secretly to Tehran and it seems it was buried somewhere in Persia.

After al-Shirazi's execution, the Babis rallied behind Husayn 'Ali Nuri and went to excesses in supporting him and he became al-Shirazi's successor. The Iranian government became angry again and wanted to execute Nuri. But the grand vizier of the Ottoman Empire interceded on his behalf and so the government banished him to Baghdad with a select group of his followers. There Nuri was joined by his brother Yahya, who called himself Sobh-e Azal. But the Iranian government was not happy with their presence in Baghdad and they were sent to Istanbul where a dispute over leadership developed between the two brothers. Each was joined by a number of followers. So the Ottoman caliph's government rid itself of both, sending Husayn to Acre in 1868 and banishing Yahya to Cyprus. But each was trying to get rid of the other and to gain sole leadership. Finally, Husayn, who called himself Baha'ullah, triumphed and gained control.

He started to write books to disseminate and establish his call. He published a number of those books before he died in Acre in 1892 and was buried in the so-called Bayt al-Bahjah on the foothills of Mount Carmel.

Husayn left behind a number of children, including 'Abbas, who was named Husayn's successor and who called himself 'Abd-al-Baha'. 'Abbas traveled in America, Europe and Egypt and noticed the aversion displayed by all people toward his call as a religion negating all previous religions. He then claimed that his call was a message of social reform and sought to prove this with evidence, thus adding to its principles glittering ideas acceptable

to the world and which were intended to embellish the call he had inherited so that it would become acceptable to the hearts, such as the ideas of equality between men and women, disarmament, a single international language, the creation of an international court of justice, the preaching of peace and love, the renunciation of fanaticism and so forth. 'Abbas died without leaving behind any sons. He did not leave his succession to either of his brothers but to his grandson from his daughter, named Shawqi Afandi al-Rabbani. This happened around 1922. But the disputes among the Baha'is intensified to such a degree that they could not even elect a successor and their affairs came to be managed by the Greater College, the Greater Assembly and local assemblies in each country.

Baha'ism came to Egypt in 1910 with the visit of 'Abd-al-Baha' to the country. He delivered some speeches in a number of scientific institutes and founded the Baha'i Scientific Association in Cairo. A general center for Baha'is was also founded in al-Wayli area of Cairo and several assemblies were founded in the governorates. On 19 July 1960, a republican decree was issued dissolving the Baha'i assemblies and banning their activities because they called openly for rebelling against the dictates of Islam and the other divine religions.

Despite that ban, the Baha'is continued their prohibited activity secretly. The state security intelligence agencies arrested them in several capital cases in 1965, 1967 and, finally, in 1972.

Babism, later Baha'ism, is neither a sect nor a creed associated with one of the three divine religions. It is a religion that is independent of all of them--a religion with its own messenger to whom the message is revealed (al-Bab and then his son al-Baha').

Their rites include confining the prayer to nine prostrations. They turn toward the tomb of al-Baha' in Acre when they pray. This is done on the order and instructions of al-Baha' himself, who said: "If you wish to pray, then turn your faces toward my holiest direction."

He also dictated that his followers make the pilgrimage to his tomb and he voided the pilgrimage to the Holy Mosque in Mecca. He even recommended that this mosque be demolished.

Shaykh Jad-al-Haqq 'Ali Jad-al-Haqq: Freedom Does Not Lie in Chaos nor in Destruction of Faith

Is any Muslim entitled to believe in whatever he wants?

This question perhaps calls on us to answer in isolation from religion and piety. Religion is the belief in the presence of a higher entity that possesses everything, with nobody else possessing anything--an entity to which those with sensitive feelings and sublime thoughts find their way. (An example is Abraham's soliloquy which is recounted by al-An'am chapter of the Koran. Abraham looked at the creatures around him and looked at the stars, the moon and the sun and he saw them changing and setting after

rising and shining and he reached the conclusion that the higher entity was the creator of the skies and the earth.)

Let it not be said that this indicates that the human intellect preceded religion in leading and guiding mankind because whoever says this indubitably denies that the universe has a god who manages its affairs, who is compassionate to his creatures and who leads and tends them. This is made evident by what the Koran says about Adam's character and about how God taught him all the names because this is the key to language, even the key to mankind's life. In its words, religion contains all the sublime meanings and all the sound scientific teachings that reform man, that have come in succession in the hands of God's prophets and that elevate man and lead him to the two plateaus.

Therefore, the attempt to create a mental or intellectual religion made by man is an abortive attempt, or rather pure fiction, because the basis on which this intellectual endeavor is founded differs fundamentally from the basis and method of the successive divine religions. A divine religion appeals not only to the intellect but is also experienced by the other human faculties. A divine religion elevates the mind, the intellect and the conscience, guides behavior and preserves the human social system, beginning with the family, the people and the nation and ending with all mankind.

Religion deals with and corrects one's faith, i.e., the relationship with God and those transcendental facts which one must believe in--transcendental facts which the intellect cannot understand nor determine, such as faith in God, in His angels, in His books, in His prophets and in the hereafter. Then there are the rites of worship that perpetuate the good relationship between man and his creator and between mankind as a society and its creator and that establish the religious deterrent that promotes virtue and discourages vice. There are, furthermore, the practical relationships of life, such as selling, leasing, hiring wage workers, giving, marriages, divorces, disputes and inheritance rights and the means to control society, such as the penal codes.

A divine religion has its special characteristics, the most important being the fact that it is founded on reliable divine revelation. It is God's word to the nation to which this word is addressed.

As for piety, it is the sincere observance of the religious dictates to whose general contents a reference has already been made. Piety is the practice of religion when this religion is reliably derived from God Almighty.

If this is religion and piety, then is any Egyptian entitled to believe in whatever he likes, and why? There is no doubt that Egypt is a humane society with its established religious values. The values of Islam entered this society centuries ago and this society must defend its faith with the logic of social defense about which people like to speak repeatedly in order to insure the piety, progress and stability of society.

A society rises to repeal those invading its land and property and it unites against tyrants and corrupters, such as thieves, murderers and rapists, and does not allow them to commit whatever vices they believe to be legitimate.

Isn't it the citizen's duty to break up, even bury, those who attack him with ideas that shatter his faith, obliterate his personality and turn the divine and reliable direction to which he turns for prayer in the direction of those who are corrupt and who have corrupted the earth?

Social defense is a duty established by the Koran before mankind started talking of this defense in this age and thought that it was something new. God speaks of this defense in the Koran in clear words that form the basis and the rule for society's responsibility to protect its material resources, its human capabilities and its divine faith. God said: "Had God not driven back the people, the earth would have been corrupted." God also said: "O you faithful, strengthen yourselves and your kinsmen with a fire whose fuel is people and stones and which is guarded by strong and mighty angels who do not disobey God's orders and who do what they are told."

Moreover, doesn't the constitution we have established and which was promulgated after a referendum among the Egyptian people state clearly that Islam is the state religion and that the principles of the Islamic Shari'a are the main source of legislation? This constitutional provision requires Egyptian society, and every Muslim Egyptian citizen in it, not to stray from the constitution but to defend it. Society is like a body: if one part of the body gets infected and is left untreated, the infection spreads to the rest of the body, ruins it and destroys all its mainstays.

Therefore, Egyptian society must defend itself and repel corruption and the corrupters who rebel against its faith because they are infidels who renounce their God and their country. Consequently, it is right to subject them to a deterrent punishment that reaches the limits of high treason.

Freedom cannot consist of chaos and of the destruction of faith and values and it does not consist of subservience to others. So strike hard the hands of those who have returned with the torches of sedition and of religious unrest, who fight the religion God has decreed for His servants and who divert people from the religion that unites them for what is right--a religion with which they strengthen themselves and protect their country. Tell the citizens that the good earth of Egypt rejects bad faith and will, God willing, remain a lighthouse of faith and a home of Islam engaged in the social defense embodied in God's words: "Had God not driven back the people, the earth would have been corrupted."

#### 'Abd-al-Latif Hamzah: Egyptian Muslim Is Not Entitled To Believe in What Violates Islam

If the question asked on the occasion of what has been recently raised in connection with Baha'ism--is the Egyptian entitled to believe in whatever he wishes--then the answer is that in accordance with the Shari'a, no Egyptian is entitled to believe in whatever he likes because to God, the religion is Islam, as the word of the Koran states. As long as the Egyptian is a Muslim, then he is not at all entitled to embrace a religion that contradicts the religion of Islam. If a Muslim strays from Islam and embraces a religion that contradicts Islam, such as Baha'ism, he becomes a turncoat in the eyes

of Islam. The rule for a turncoat in Islam is that he be asked to return to Islam and to have his slate wiped clean again. If he does return to Islam, well and fine. But if he insists on his backsliding, he must, in accordance with the Shari'a, be killed. If the turncoat is a woman, she must be asked to return to Islam and have her slate wiped clean again. If she does, well and fine. If she insists, she must be imprisoned until she either repents or dies.

This is God's rule insofar as the turncoat is concerned.

But if the Egyptian is a non-Muslim, then he may embrace whatever faith he wishes. But if he embraces Islam, he may not then embrace any other religion. If he does, he becomes an apostate from Islam and must be punished like any other turncoat Muslim in the manner we have specified. God knows best.

Dr 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Nimr: Freedom of Religious Belief Is Different from Freedom of Belief

A man is free to believe that so and so is good or bad and there is nothing to prevent him from changing this belief. He is free to believe that a certain party is good today and bad tomorrow without his having to face material punishment for this belief. He is free to embrace any creed in Islam: Sunna, Shi'ite, Shafi'i or Hanafi, for example, and to change his mind tomorrow. A Christian is free to embrace Catholicism and then convert to Protestantism or to any other Christian creed because when he turns from this to that creed in Islam or Christianity, he remains a Muslim or a Christian who has not strayed from his faith. This in itself is easy and here a man has the immunity of freedom of belief. But to break away from Islam altogether is a different matter. This is something that comes under the canopy of freedom of religious belief, which is not the same as the freedom of belief which applies to whatever belief a man embraces without shouldering any responsibility. A long and heated debate took place over the two phrases "the freedom of belief is absolute" and "the freedom of religious belief is absolute" in the committee which laid down the principles of the 1923 constitution. Participants in the committee included 'Abd-al-'Aziz Fahmi (Pasha), Shaykh Bakhit, Shaykh Khayrat Radi and Abba Yu'anis, who finally concluded that freedom of belief, which is different from the freedom of religious belief, is absolute. Islam gains its immunity from the fact that it is the state's official religion. Lord Curzon had presented to the committee a draft saying that "freedom of religious belief is absolute. All of Egypt's people have the right to engage openly or secretly in the rites of any denomination or religion as long as it is not incompatible with public order and public morals."

Shaykh Bakhit al-Muti'i, then mufti of Egypt, demanded the amendment of this article in a session held on 15 August 1922 because no religion approved it in the form in which it was phrased then. His Beatitude Abba Yu'anis supported him, saying: "The shaykh's proposal is beneficial and we have new evidence to support it." The Abba then proceeded to explain his evidence. Shaykh Khayrat Radi then proposed that the word religious be omitted so that

the phrase may read "freedom of belief is absolute" in order to prevent tampering with the acknowledged divine religions and to obstruct the emergence of any religious heresy and preserve the religions which Islam found when it came.

Answering a question by lawyer Ibrahim al-Halabawi, a member of the committee, about what was intended by the word belief and whether it included religious belief, Shaykh Bakhit said: "Belief is something and religion is something else," meaning in this regard general belief and stating that even though religion is a belief, it is a belief with special qualities that put it above mere belief in anything else because religion has its sanctity which must be preserved. Article 46 of the existing constitution states that "the state shall guarantee freedom of faith and of the exercise of religious rites." This article is governed by Article 2, which states that "Islam is the state's religion." Thus, Islam has become one of the mainstays of the system which may not be undermined or manipulated.

It is well known that the Baha'is were Muslims originally and that they then renounced Islam, founded a new religion and attacked Islam. This is why a legal religious opinion has been taken and why all jurists have agreed since the emergence of Baha'ism that the Baha'is are infidels and apostates from Islam, regardless of whether they have abandoned Islam and embraced Baha'ism or whether they were born to Baha'i parents and have continued to embrace their faith.

The State Council--the Administrative Judiciary Court--examined lawsuit No 195 which was brought before the court by a Baha'i railroad employee against the Railroad Authority for refusing to pay him a social allowance for his child who was born to a Baha'i mother, because the marriage producing this child was not recognized by the state.

The plaintiff's counsel, lawyer Saba Habashi and a colleague of his, and the government and judiciary counsel cited lengthy studies on this issue by old and new jurists and a number of constitutional studies, most of which I have before me right now. On 26 May 1952, the "open court, formed under the chairmanship of 'Abd-al-Majid al-Tuhami and with the membership of counselors 'Ali 'Ali Mansur and 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Biblawi and court secretary Sayyid Khalafallah," issued its decision, which was founded on jurisprudential and constitutional arguments and studies. Concluding its decision, the court said: "In view of all of the above and because the plaintiff's lawsuit with all its bases and in all its aspects is null and void, is not supported by either the law or reality and merits dismissal, the court has decided to dismiss the case and to require the plaintiff to pay court costs and litigation fees."

This decision means that the intermarriage of the Baha'is is not to be acknowledged because it is a marriage between turncoats who are subject to the death sentence and whose actions cannot be given any consideration. Consequently, there is no religious legal consideration for what such a marriage produces because the fruit is the product of a voided marriage

unrecognized by Islam, Christianity or Judaism. The plaintiff is not entitled to social aid for his son the way legitimate children produced by acknowledged Islamic, Christian or Jewish marriages are entitled to such aid.

On another occasion, the Baha'is wanted to bury one of their dead in a Muslim cemetery and the Muslims prevented them. So the Baha'is filed a lawsuit in court but the court again dismissed the case, stating that they are not entitled to bury their dead in Muslim cemeteries because they follow a new and false religion that is not recognized among us.

If it is said that this is in violation of freedom of belief, then we say that religious belief has its sanctity and its status and is different from mere general belief, or else religious affairs will turn into chaos. If it is said that this is in violation of UN recommendations, then we say that we are not bound by any recommendations or resolutions from any organization contradicting our religion. Moreover, the United States, which has the United Nations in its own territory, has not observed UN recommendations on human rights, equality and nondiscrimination. Our religion and its teachings are more worthy of being observed than any thing else.

Dr al-Husayni Hashim: Man Is Responsible for What He Declares and Is Accountable to God for What He Harbors in His Heart

The mainstays of nations, be they material or moral mainstays, need to be fully protected and carefully secured, or else societies' basic systems will be shaken and will end up being obliterated.

This is why constitutions have come into being to establish the nations' basic systems and general mainstays which may not be undermined. This is something agreed upon. The Egyptian constitutions promulgated in the various eras have stated that Islam is the state's religion. This means that society's beliefs, ethics and observed principles rely on an Islamic foundation. It is well known that Islam respects the divine religions and believes in the revelation made to them by God.

If we find nowadays a new heresy attacking Islam or the principles of these religions, we must stand in the face of this heresy and stop it.

As for freedom of belief, it is evident that the dictates of Islam do not bring a man to account for what he harbors in his conscience. If a man is an atheist and displays faith, then nobody is entitled to take him to task for this behavior and the matter is left to God. But a man is accountable for what he declares and preaches, for what he displays and for all forms of corruption he seeks because allowing every delinquent corrupter to go unrestrained in his efforts to sabotage the faith is something that leads to destroying society's structure.

Baha'ism started in the last century as a Shi'ite concept and then went beyond it to pronounce itself a religion striking at both Christianity and Islam. Recently, Baha'ism has developed into a form of Masonry and its

subsidiaries--a phenomenon that destroys values, distorts principles and dissolves societies' mainstays.

All matters are ultimately in God's hands.

Ahmad Rushdi: Security Covers Political Aspect and Does Not Undermine Citizen's Liberties

Maj Gen Ahmad Rushdi, the minister of interior, said: "Politically, the presence of the Baha'is may not seem to pose a danger to political security. But the theory of security itself must not stop just at that which protects society's political framework but must go beyond to what safeguards and protects society's religious, moral and social framework."

The minister of interior added that he noticed recently that the Baha'i organization has been expanding its base and disseminating its concepts, which are founded on distorting the divine religions, especially Islam. This current, which attacks the religions, must be confronted, exposed and prevented from spreading because it represents an attack on every citizen's belief. It is the security agency's responsibility to protect legitimate religious beliefs from these assaults which, if left unchecked in the name of freedom, will lead Egyptian society into a serious pitfall.

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CSO: 4504/268

LIBYA

LIBYAN PAPER CONDEMNS U.S. VETO ON SOUTH LEBANON RESOLUTION

LD161548 Tripoli JANA in English 1431 GMT 16 Mar 85

[Text] Tripoli, Jumada Thani 23, 16 Mar (JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY)--AL JAMAHIRIYAH paper of the revolutionary committees in the Jamahiriya here yesterday said the use of American veto against resolution on South Lebanon is not the first of its kind. America has always been enthusiastic in defending and covering up the crimes of its ally, something that proves strong link between head of world terror and Zionist entity.

Despite such attempts, however, the world knows very well the crimes of Zionist gangs against unarmed children and elderly and who provide these gangs with support to do so.

In practical terms, the paper rightly argued, the world does not recognise law or international principles and such words are not more than ink on paper. In effect, small nations will suffer from these hungry wolves, exactly like the situation in Lebanon and Palestine and whoever raise a voice to defend their rights will be stopped by the veto of superpowers, above all America.

The paper concluded by suggesting a solution of three points: i) to unite and challenge America till it knows that other parts of the world do exist no matter how they suffered from colonialism and imperialism, particularly the Arab nation, ii) the use of force not visits to the White House, iii) unionist steadfastness and a strong hit-back attitude.

CSO: 4500/63

LIBYA

SOVIET-LIBYAN FRIENDSHIP DELEGATION VISITS GPC

LD161829 Tripoli JANA in English 1742 GMT 16 Mar 85

[Text] Tripoli, Jumada Thani 23, 16 Mar (JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY)--This morning the Soviet-Libyan Arab Friendship Society delegation paid a visit to the General People's Congress headquarters. The delegation, headed by first deputy premier of the Armenian Republic, Vladimir Mossyebar, [Movsesyan?] [spelling as received] was welcomed by secretary for the affairs of the people's committees who said: "We have common grounds with the Soviet Union: struggle against imperialism, Zionism and racism and support to liberation causes in the world."

The secretary for the affairs of the people's committees then gave a detailed explanation on the civilised transformations taking place on the land of the great Al Fatih and gave a report on the stages that have already been achieved on the great man-made river.

In reply, Mr Vladimir [as received] strongly praised the gigantic achievements that were realised by the Libyan Arab people in various fields and expressed his appreciation for the role played by the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyyah in struggle against imperialism, Zionism and racism.

The delegation is attending the Soviet cultural week currently taking place on the land of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyyah.

CSO: 4500/63

LIBYA

EGYPTIAN WORKERS' UNION CONDEMNS 'PUPPET' REGIME

LD092057 Tripoli JANA in English 1819 GMT 9 Mar 85

[Text] Tripoli, Jumada Thani 16, 9 Mar (JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY)--The leader of the revolution received a cable from the General Union of the Egyptian Workers' Syndicates and Associations in which they asserted that the Arab people in Egypt rely greatly on the great Al Fatih revolution in supporting its earnest steps to liberate its land and will.

The general union said in its message "embodying the will of the Egyptian popular masses of which the General Union is a natural extension inside the country and an integral part of it, and in accordance with the basic provisions of the United Arab Republics especially its fundamental article in Section "C" and the union constitution Articles 29 and 31: Considering that the withdrawal of the Egyptian regime from the United Arab Republics was illegal and in violation of the basic provisions of the constitution of the union.

For the withdrawal decision was imposed from the top and lacked the legality of the masses for its approval. The state of the United Arab Republics, therefore, is still in existence--so are the institutions of the union. This is supported by two-thirds of the union's council in accordance with the union's constitution in its Articles 33, 34 and 35.

The General Union of the Egyptian Workers' Syndicates and Associations asserted in its message to the leader of the revolution that any decision taken by two-thirds of the nation's union council in the two countries, Libya and Syria, would be legal and binding on all parties.

The General Union affirmed in its message "upon our belief in the state of the United Arab Republics and following the decision of the Libyan Arab people to reviving the union institutions in concordance with the will of the Syrian masses, the Egyptian people is bound to organise themselves within the union constitutions through its vital forces of the effective masses leadership confronting the chauvinistic and treacherous regime in Egypt.

The General Union of the Egyptian Workers' Syndicates and Associations added in its message to the leader of the revolution that the Egyptian masses on the soil of sisterly Libya had taken an historical decision by unequivocally

opposing the withdrawal from the United Republics and that these masses, in taking the decisions, have a legal right, in conformity with their adherence to the union and unity, to be organised inside the union institutions.

It is therefore for the union's union council, in accordance with the constitution Article 35, to take the necessary decisions to rectify the situation and correct the course of the Egyptian regime by supporting the Egyptian masses in the face of the puppet Egyptian regime.

CSO: 4500/63

LIBYA

IMPACT OF POWER STRUGGLE ON LOCAL ECONOMY

London AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL in English 13 Mar 85 pp 3, 4

[Text]

The apparent quietness of the General Peoples' Congress in Libya earlier this month belied a tough behind-the-scenes power struggle. On one hand are the revolutionary committees, headed by the ruthless Col. Hassan Shkal, on the other is the old-guard of bureaucrats and politicians who want to tone down the ideological rhetoric and tackle the weakening economy. As a result the Justice Secretariat, under Muftah Kaiba, has regained its task of coordinating "revolutionary security", and two previously autonomous bodies - *Jamahariyah* Security and the Bureau for External Security - have been merged back into the Justice Secretariat.

The Bureau for External Security, established at the February 1984 GPC with the aim of hunting down dissidents, was put under the charge of Col. Younis Belgazem, a career intelligence officer in his sixties who worked for the Libyan monarchy before Gadaffi. But he always favoured a policy of diplomatic reconciliation with dissidents rather than outright assassination (AC Vol 25 No 1). Although neither approach has had much success, Belgazem has now apparently been blamed for Libya's failure to silence Gadaffi's opponents abroad, particularly for the bungled attempt to assassinate former Libyan prime minister Abdel-Hamid Bakkoush in Cairo last November. Even before this month's GPC there was a noticeable toughening of Libya's policy towards dissidents.

In an editorial three weeks ago, the Revolutionary Committees' influential newspaper, *Al Zahf al Akhdar* (Green March), accused Britain, West Germany and the United States of harbouring terrorists - in other words opponents of Col. Gadaffi's regime. The newspaper suggested that in retaliation the Libyan government should give massive support, including weapons, to the *Irish Republican Army* and the *Red Fraction* in West Germany. It added that London

and Bonn should become the "battlefield" where the war between Libya and its enemies is fought out.

Libyan diplomats in West Germany hastily assured the government there that the Revolutionary Committees' views, as expressed in the newspaper, do not reflect official Libyan policy. Although the committees ostensibly have a degree of autonomy, in practice they are used by Gadaffi to implement his personal policy when more traditional methods of persuasion fail. As was documented in detail at the time (AC Vol 25 No 9), the activities of the committees at the Libyan Peoples' Bureau in London last year led directly to the shooting incident and the breaking of diplomatic relations with Britain.

Belgazem has also been held personally responsible for the failure of West Germany to deport three leading anti-Gadaffi individuals. In 1983, it will be recalled, in his capacity as interior minister, Belgazem negotiated the exchange of two Libyans held in West Germany (on charges of torturing Libyan students) in return for eight German hostages in Libya. Last year Libya said that some of the commandos who attacked Gadaffi's Bab al-Assiziya barracks in Tripoli (AC Vol 25 No 18) were trained in West Germany. Once again Belgazem had to smooth relations between the two countries.

With Belgazem shifted sideways, possibly soon out of office altogether, a more thorough-going Cabinet reshuffle is expected before the end of the month.

The low-key nature of the Congress was certainly in keeping with the country's straitened economic circumstances and Gadaffi's pressing need for a measure of political consensus. There was little of the carefully orchestrated "dissent" which characterised last year's Congress, when delegates challenged government policy on such topics as primary education and army service for women. This time the authorities were taken to task only on relatively minor points, such as their failure to reduce the amount of foreign labour (a traditional cry in depressed economies) and their failures in agricultural marketing.

The 1985 budget figures adopted by the GPC underlined the need for across-the-board restraint. Falling oil revenue has reduced this year's administrative expenditure by 17% to \$4bn, and development expenditure by 19% to \$5.7bn. Austerity has begun to hit ordinary Libyans. Restrictions on imports mean that supermarkets now regularly display empty shelves. Overseas travel has been curtailed, thus reducing access to foreign currency.

Foreign businesses in Libya are being paid increasingly late: *Stone and Webster*, the American project

manager and main contractor on the \$1bn Ras Lanuf petrochemical project, south west of Benghazi, is threatening to take the Libyan government to the *International Chamber of Commerce* arbitration court in Paris for non-payment of over \$20m of fees now at least a year overdue. Even Libyan students, who have always been treated carefully by the regime, have not been immune to the general retrenchment. About two thousand young Libyans studying abroad (including about 1,500 in Britain) have been recalled home prior before completing their studies.

Meanwhile Gadaffi's strong-man cousin, Ahmed **Gadafaddam**, appears to be acting as *de facto* Libyan ambassador to Saudi Arabia. He has been in Riyadh for much of the past three months. Apart from trying to interest the Saudis in backing a Libyan-Sudanese rapprochement (AC Vol 26 No 4), he would also like to use the Kingdom's money to finance Gadaffi's Great Man-made River (AC Vol 25 No 1), which Gadaffi continues to promote as a pan-Arab project. The Saudis are not unhappy about encouraging this line of diplomacy, so keen are they to smooth divisions between Arab nations and foster a measure of Arab unity prior to tabling a new peace plan for Palestine and the Middle East •

CSO: 4500/66

LIBYA

BRIEFS

SUDANESE REFUGEES FLEE INTO LIBYA--Al Kufrah, 5 Mar (JANA)--Large numbers of Sudanese citizens continue arriving in Arab Libyan areas adjacent to the Sudanese border, fleeing from political atrocities and persecution and a terrible famine in Sudan. More than 7,000 Sudanese citizens have already arrived. They have been sheltered in special camps near al-Kufrah. Various committees are giving them aid, provisions, food and medicine. These hunger-stricken thousands have crossed long distances in the desert, where they met with many dangers and horrors before reaching the Jamahiriya. Many of them have travelled for more than 45 days. A number of these Sudanese citizens have told JANA correspondents about their terrifying ordeal under the Numayri regime. [Excerpt] [Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1930 GMT 5 Mar 85 LD]

PROTOCOL SIGNED WITH SPAIN--Madrid, Jumada Thani 6, 15 Mar (JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY)--A protocol on development of existing co-operation between the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Spain was signed last night. The protocol stipulates increasing size of trade to restore trade balance between the Jamahiriya and Spain, in addition to co-operation in the fields of agriculture and industry especially small industries. It also stipulates formation of two committees to be charged with laying down the foundations of this co-operation in the field of joint agricultural and industrial ventures within the framework of the Libyan Arab Spanish Joint Committee and exchange of visits of experts from the two countries. [Text] [Tripoli JANA in English 1748 GMT 19 Mar 85 LD]

CSO: 4500/63

MAURITANIA

TAYA'S SUPPORT GROUPS, POTENTIAL RIVALS PROFILED

London AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL in English 13 Mar 85 pp 5-7

[Text]

Head of state Col. Maaouya Sid'Ahmed Ould Taya badly needs to capitalise on the popularity of his palace coup in December which usurped Col. Mohammed Khouna Ould Haidalla. But his room for economic and political manouevre is very limited: having been devastated by drought and years of ineffective leadership under Mohammed Haidalla, the economy needs drastic reform; yet to carry it out would severely strain Taya's standing with the commercial and political interests of powerful groups within the administration and armed forces. His priority, therefore, is to consolidate his domestic power-base. Failure to do so will jeopardise support from the Middle East and the West, and his regime would risk degenerating into the same brand of ephemeral and ineffectual government that has presided in Nouakchott since the overthrow of President Moktar Ould Daddah in 1978.

Taya's efforts to build a power-base in fact started over a year ago, after he was sacked from Haidalla's cabinet in March 1984. He began carefully to plan Haidalla's downfall (AC Vol 25 No 6). As commander-in-chief of the armed forces he set about making himself popular both among officers and the military rank-and-file. He also discreetly increased the French military presence in the months preceding the coup.

Within military ranks Taya can now count on the support of a number of influential officers, surprisingly more from the black than the Moorish community. They include Capt. Diop Djibril, a Toucouleur, commander of the *Surêté Nationale*; Col. Yall Abdoulaye, a Soninké, head of the *Gendarmerie Nationale*; Lt-Col. Ann Amadou Babali, a Toucouleur, minister of finance and trade; Capt. Mohammed Ould Sabar, a harratine<sup>2</sup>, commander of the *Garde Nationale*; Djibril Ould Abdallah<sup>3</sup>, minister of interior - a key post; and the Moorish officer, Commander Sidina Ould Sidiya, commander

of the Zouerate military region, the area in the extreme north which borders Western Sahara. Sidiya keeps a particularly close eye on Commander **Moulaye Boukreiss**, known for his pro-*Polisario* views, who commands the Atar Military Academy.

However, Taya will probably have a rough ride with a clique of conservative senior officers. Potential rivals in this group are Col. **Ahmedou Ould Abdallah**, commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and his assistant, Lt-Col. **Brahim Ould Alioune N'diaye**, a Wolof-Moorish *métis*. Other rightwing officers are Capt. **Mohammed Lemine Ould Ndiaye**, minister of equipment and transport; Maj. **Mohammed Mahmoud Ould Deh**, minister of mines and energy, Ahmed Ould Ghanahallah, minister of information and ex-ambassador to France; and **Hasni Ould Didi**, minister of national education. Expected to back this conservative group is Capt. **Cheikh Ould Boida**, ex-minister of Islamic justice, now head of the *Structures de l'Education des Masses* (SEM), the Libyan-style organisation which seeks to mobilise popular support for the régime and probably lay the foundation for a political party.

The president's inner circle consists of presidential cabinet director **Louleid Ould Weddad** and his assistant, **Khan Boubacar**; secretary-general of the presidency **Isselmou Ould Mohammed Vall**; press adviser **Brahim Ould Abdallahi**; and economics adviser **Moustapha Ould Cheikh Mohamadou**, the former vice-governor of the central bank who is reputed to be sympathetic to the Islamic fundamentalist movement.

Taya's first political problem, which resulted at the end of last year in the sacking of foreign minister Maj. **Cheikh Sid'Ahmed Ould Babamine**, also reflected Mauritania's delicate position in North African regional politics. For Babamine was regarded by the Algerian government under President **Chadli Benjedid** as too pro-Moroccan. The Algerians had misgivings at an early stage on coming to power. Taya had said that his government would seek a better balance in relations with its northern neighbours, and that it would reduce support for Polisario.

Though Nouakchott has tried to appease Algeria, not least by Babamine's dismissal and the subsequent reaffirmation of Mauritania's recognition of the *République Arabe Sahraouie Démocratique* (RASD), Taya's régime does not actively support Polisario in international forums. Contacts with Morocco have been reactivated. Already the Moroccan state airline, *Royal Air Maroc*, has added Nouakchott as a stop-over on its weekly West African run. Full diplomatic relations are not far off.

In an effort to widen its scope for diplomatic manoeuvre, especially if moves towards a settlement over Western Sahara were to threaten Mauritanian interests, Taya has put out feelers to Col. Moammar Gadaffi, and emissaries have been sent to smooth relations with Polisario leader Mohammed Abdel Aziz. Ties have also been strengthened with Senegal and Mali.

The first cautious steps in a clean-up of the state administration have begun. For example, two new state controllers have been appointed (**Mohammed Mahmoud Ould Mah** and **Bah Saidou**) and a number of judicious ministerial appointments have been made. They include **Isselmou Ould Baba** as minister of maritime economy, **Taki Ould Sidi** as minister of planning and land improvement, **Messmoud Ould Belkair** (a *fiarratine*) as minister of rural development, and **Camara Ali Gueladio** (a *Soninké*) as minister of higher education and the civil service. The new director of the state food organisation, the *Commission à la Sécurité Alimentaire*, is the widely respected **Mohammed Sidya Ould Bah**. And the *Société Nationale Industrielle et Minière* (SNIM), which is responsible for most of the country's foreign exchange earnings, has been placed under the equally able charge of **Saleck Ould Heine**.

#### **The home fronts**

Mauritania's various political groups, though not usually averse to Taya's coup, are cautiously watching for the unfolding of the regime's policies. The main groups to consider are:

- *L'Alliance pour une Mauritanie Démocratique* (AMD): a group of conservative politicians from the Daddah era, with some opportunistic younger elements, the AMD sought to resist militarily the Haidalla regime and discredit it abroad. They naturally cheered Haidalla's downfall and verbally support Taya. Several leading AMD figures abroad have returned to Nouakchott, including leading intellectuals **Mohammed Abderrahmane Ould Amine** and **Moustapha Ould Abeidarahmane**, and businessmen **Ahmed Ould Maynouh**, **Mohammed Ould Jiddou**, **Sidi Mohammed Ould Ahmed** and **Chneikria Ould Mahmoud**. Possibly Babamine's sacking was a warning to the AMD.

- Islamic Fundamentalists: the *Conseil Supérieur Islamique* (CSI) remains the nerve-centre of the Mauritanian fundamentalist movement, with **Boussiéri Ould Boudeh** as its chief ideologue. They suffered a setback with the coming to power of Taya, who is much more of a modernist than his predecessor. Sharia law is henceforth to be played down.

- *Le Mouvement National Démocratique* (MND): the remnants of the once powerful *gauchiste* movement of the early 1970s, known as the *Kadahines*

(literally, proletarians), supported Taya's coup. But they will reserve further judgement until his policies are clearer. A number of MND activists hold important government posts. MND stands for a reaffirmation of the "Algerian alliance," support for the Polisario cause, a strong anti-corruption drive and the reinforcing of state authority, both within the country and abroad. The recent acquittal of **Traoré Ladji**, accused of malpractice in the running of the state pharmacy company, appears to indicate that the regime does not want to alienate the MND.

● *El Hor* (Free Man): the organisation is the standard bearer of the freed slaves (harratines) who are attempting to assure greater opportunity for their brothers in the rigid and semi-feudal framework of Mauritanian society. **Hamoyd Boitgel** is generally considered one of *El Hor*'s main leaders.

*El Hor* was satisfied by the nomination of a harratine, **Messoud Ould Belkhir**, as minister of rural development. He will be in charge of handling the delicate land reform programme, so important to the effective emancipation of harratines living in the countryside. Other harratines have been recently promoted in the state and military apparatus. *El Hor* will be pushing for an acceleration of reform.

● *Union des Travailleurs Mauritaniens* (UTM): the trade union movement is in crisis, and its resolution will be a decisive test for the intentions of the Taya regime. Secretary-general **El Khoury Ould H'midi**, released from prison late last year, is doggedly fought by a faction behind deputy secretary-general **Hamoyd Boitgel**. H'midi, an Arab nationalist of the Nasserite stamp, is accused of being a racist by those close to *El Hor*, backed by elements close to the MND.

● *Le Patronat: la Confédération Générale des Employeurs Mauritaniens* (CGEM), headed by businessman **Sidi Mohammed Ould Abbas**, is lying low as many of its members were closely linked to Haidalla and his brother "Billy". A thorough reform of the economic system would much reduce its members' lucrative export-import business and currency exchange. Those businessmen who have made fortunes in the fishing business, through alliances with the Las Palmas (Canary Island) fishing mafia, are particularly worried by Taya's intentions. A corporative body, *la Fédération des Industries et des Armements de Pêche* (FIAP) defends their interests.

● *Les Structures de l'Éducation des Masses* (SEM): set up three years ago by Haidalla, SEM is now being purged of its pro-Haidalla leadership. Some Taya backers believe it is being purged too soon. It remains to be seen if the SEM can be turned into a means of popular mobilisation instead of being

merely a mechanism to channel popular aspirations around ready-made government watchwords and a means of promotion for ambitious potentates.

● Black Nationalistas: the coming to power of Taya, one of the rare Moorish politicians who has some support in the black African community, has thrown off balance black nationalists. They want to hive off the southern part of the country in order to form either an independent black republic or an alliance with Senegal.

If Taya is unable to consolidate his power-base, Mauritania might begin to crumble into a "Chadian" scenario involving groups of warlords and a series of fragile, transient central governments. The fate of Western Sahara will have an important bearing on this scenario.

**Footnotes:**

1. He is under house arrest in a fort near Nouakchott. His closest associates at the time of his fall were Capt. **Mohammed Ahmed Moulaye Ould Hachem**, director of *La Commission à la Sécurité Alimentaire*; Capt. **Moustapha Diop**, head of the *Sécurité d'Etat*; Capt. **Amath Ayté**, director of the *Surêté Nationale*; Capt. **Breika Ould M'barack**, commander of the Nouakchott military district and the head of an informal information network in the capital's popular quarters; and Commander **Mohammed Lemine Ould Zein**, director of the *Gendarmerie Nationale*.

2. There were 52 French military personnel at the end of last year. At present there are about 80; within a few months there might be 100.

3. Of Moorish culture but of black African origin, the harratines often regard with ambiguity the longstanding dispute between the black Africans in the south and the Moors, of Arab-Berber background, over issues like Arabisation of education and the administration.

4. Until the beginning of this year he was known officially as Lt-Col. **Gabriel Cimper**. A French-Moorish *métis*, his decision to change his name indicates political ambition. Although *métis* play only minor roles in local politics, his French father converted to Islam, and Djribil was raised in the Moorish way of life. Significantly, Taya dispatched him to Morocco to discuss the possibilities of reestablishing diplomatic relations.

IRAQ

#### COOPERATIVE UNION PLAN FOR 1985 SET

Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 31 Jan 85 p 6

[Text] The General Cooperative Union authorized a new plan for the current year, covering the areas of development, production and importing. It authorized implementation of an import program to provide the needs of cooperatives for household utensils, sewing machines, mens', womens' and childrens' clothing, small appliances and food items.

The plan includes development of the activity of consumer associations, which number 112 associations distributed among all of the governorates of the country, increasing the number of production associations to 25, and opening 9 new cooperative markets in Baghdad.

The plan includes implementation of a large number of housing projects and cooperative markets in the governorates of Baghdad, Babil and al-Muthanna.

In the area of training, the plan includes conducting 25 courses for 690 trainees from the administrations of the cooperatives and workers in the cooperative markets, who during the course will receive lectures on the principles of the cooperative movement and warehouse accounting.

In the area of studies and research, the plan encompasses the following: convening an annual scientific conference devoted to activities of the cooperative movement and the horizons of its development; performance of a comprehensive survey of the consumer cooperative associations; establishing standards pertaining to their classification and their basic characteristics; preparation of a large number of analytical studies of the cooperative associations for use in planning their activities; preparation of a directory of their activities for their boards of directors; and establishing a system of basic facts to provide a data base for use in future plans and following up on their implementation.

In the area of information, the plan includes preparation of publications for communication of the activities of the Union and preparation of informative brochures about the cooperative movement in the country, including its horizons and its developments and an annual yearbook of the developments of the cooperative movement.

IRAQ

#### 1985 PLANS FOR SUPPLY ORGANIZATION DETAILED

Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 2 Feb 85 p 6

[Text] The Iraqi General Organization for Supply is one of the organizations which deals directly with the citizens, working in accordance with its considered plans to meet their needs and fulfill their desires for various commodities and consumer goods.

For the current year, the organization set down a programmed plan for continued supply of commodities and consumer goods to the citizens. What are the details of the plan?

Mr Subhi Khaz'al 'Ali, general director of the organization, answers this question, saying: The organization implements the details of its plans by means of its extensive and widely-spread outlets located throughout the country. It works to equip 40,000 commercial representatives, in addition to shops for the army, the internal security forces and cooperative associations, with consumer goods and commodities meeting the tastes and ages of all of the citizens. There are commercial representatives who specialize in ready-made clothing for women, children, and men and fabrics and of various sizes and colors. Other representatives specialize in children's games and sports equipment.

#### What Is New in the Plan?

In keeping with its plan, the organization is currently undertaking a comprehensive study of the departments, including new bases, conditions and rules for their operation. This includes continued and balanced supply of commodities and facilitation of the role of the representative in selling goods of the organization to the citizens.

To facilitate the sale of goods to middle-men and to facilitate their conveyance to the consumer, the organization has established sales units in the army, the internal security forces, consumer cooperatives and government agencies. It also has established other sales units to engage in developing the supply of commodities, and it has established new warehouses to store and distribute goods in a way which preserves their quality and keeps them from spoiling.

In light of the directives of the leadership of the party and the revolution concerning the necessity of providing basic commodities and services to the citizens, the organization has included in its plan for the current year authority for new means of supplying the necessary commodities to the citizens, in agreement with their tastes and moderate prices according to the seasons.

Considering that the importing of materials and consumer goods is considered an integral part of developed national production, in which organizations of the cooperative, mixed and private sectors take part, the organization deals with importing bodies throughout the world to import the necessary goods and commodities which agree with the development plans and social development which the country has witnessed under the auspices of the 17-30 July revolution.

During the past year, the organization undertook to provide a variety of fabrics by creating a sales unit devoted to their sale, which lead to the task of supplying this commodity, as well as to the task of increasing the allotments of the representatives' consumer goods and materials.

As part of the plan, the current year will see a discount of large quantities of consumer commodities and materials, whether local or foreign, in order to comply with the needs of the citizens in all seasons.

[All of this] is a result of the support which the organization has received from the leadership of the party and the revolution, and from its head, president and commander Saddam Husayn.

12780  
CSO: 4404/237

IRAQ

MAMMOTH EXPANSION OF RAIL SYSTEM PLANNED

London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 18 Jan 85 pp 50-51

[Text] A group of Brazilian companies is planning a railway network in Iraq which will link the principal border cities with Baghdad. The projected length of the line is about 1,000 kilometers, and the estimated cost is 770 million Iraqi dinars.

The new rail line is considered to be the largest Iraqi development project ever undertaken, with a capability of making Iraq an important transit trade center in the Gulf region. Iraqi authorities aim in the future to link the line with the Syrian and Turkish networks, and, eventually, with the Gulf network through Kuwait.

Iraqi authorities expect that the development will facilitate agricultural and industrial development by providing transportation of agricultural products from areas of production to consumer markets, and transporting raw materials necessary for industry. The project is considering extending a branch line for 150 kilometers to transport phosphate from the new Iraqi mines in 'Ukashat, opened in 1981, to the plant in al-Qa'im region. It will be possible for the new network to transport about 3.4 million tons of raw phosphate and this can be raised to 6.4 million tons upon introduction of some modifications in the line's transport capacity.

To market the production of the cement plant in Qubasiya, another subsidiary track of 30 kilometers will be constructed to link the upper Euphrates region, where cement facilities are located, with regions having cement-related industries and located on the main line, such as the ceramics factories in al-Ramadi.

The new rail line was designed to run in two directions from Baghdad, and to transport about 5 million tons of goods annually. Diesel-powered locomotives will reach speeds of 140 kilometers per hour. After electrification of the lines, speeds could reach 220 kilometers per hour.

12477  
CSO: 4404/199

ISRAEL

BRIEFS

OIL EXPLORATION BUDGET--The government budget for the oil exploration branch for fiscal year 1985/86 will be \$10 million, according to the director general of the Ministry of Energy, Dr Natan Arad. Dr Arad noted that the work plan for the next fiscal year accords with the new policy set by the Ministry of Energy. According to the work plan, currently in preparation, in the next 2 years there will be no exploratory drilling, except for a small number of test holes. Most exploratory drilling will be financed privately, using existing technology and new information. He stated that there is no justification for the multiplicity of bodies in the oil exploration branch, given the government's decision to cut back in this area. Therefore, by February the National Oil Company will merge with its subsidiary, Oil Explorations (Investments). Lay-offs of workers at Oil Explorations are now on the back burner, waiting for a report by the arbitrator who was appointed as a result of worker demands.  
[Text] [Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 6 Jan 85 p 5]

RADIO OBSERVATORY TO BE BUILT--A radio astronomy observatory for observing space and distant stars will be built in Israel. The construction of the antenna will make it possible to link the observatory with a worldwide network of radiotelescopes, according to the president of Israel's national committee for radio sciences, Professor Yosef Shapira. Similar observatories are operating in several countries, but none are in the Middle East. The closest ones are in India and Europe. It is estimated that construction of the observatory will cost \$1 million. Professor Shapira added that funding for the project will come from donors outside Israel. The observatory will be situated in a sparsely-populated area; one of the designated sites is a valley in the Galilee. The observatory will be linked synchronistically with the worldwide network, which in the future will also include satellites. Research in radio sciences has expanded to include electronics, communication, radar, remote sensing, signals decoding and space observations. The national committee decided that scientific activity in this field needed an extra push; thus, an English scientist was recently invited to visit Israel as an adviser on radio astronomy. In August 1987 the general assembly of associations working on radio astronomy will be held in Israel. Some 1,000 scientists from 40 countries will participate in the assembly, which will take place in Tel Aviv. [Text] [Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 20 Jan 85 p 14]

NEW ECONOMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE--A national planning and social and economic growth committee will be established in the next few weeks in the Prime Minister's office. The committee will be headed by Minister of the Economy Gad Ya'aqovi. This decision was announced by the director-general of the Prime Minister's office Avraham Tamir in a memo circulated to the cabinet. The new body will be part of the planning staff of the government and will work cooperatively with existing planning staffs--in government, academia and in business. It will not set up any new units, because of budget limitations and also in order to create an atmosphere of cooperation, rather than one of usurpation of authority which would inhibit any possibility of action. The staff will include a national planning council comprising 19 members, to be chaired by the director-general of the prime minister's office Avraham Tamir. Council members will include scientists, industrialists and businessmen, information specialists, economists, the head of the national planning authority and the chairman of the research and development council, as well as the directors-general of the ministries of finance and economy. The council will prepare for the government long- and medium-term policy recommendations in the areas of development of industrial and economic infrastructure, so that by the end of the 1980's Israeli exports and manpower resources will be doubled. [Text]

[Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 17 Feb 85 p 2]

UNEMPLOYMENT TO WORSEN--Unemployment will worsen in the coming months; in June the number of unemployed will reach 125,000, which is 8.5 percent of the civilian labor force--this chilling prediction appears in an internal memorandum presented yesterday to Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Moshe Qatzav. Currently the number of unemployed is 100,000. The number of those unemployed--according to the definition, those who have not worked for six or more days and are registered with the employment offices--will increase during this period from some 21,000 to about 30,000, a rise of almost 50 percent. Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Moshe Qatzav said in an exclusive interview with our correspondent that the figure of 30,000 unemployed is a red line which cannot be crossed. "I've heard many public figures state that there will be no unemployment, but this is merely lip service. There are some ministers who secretly hope for unemployment as an economic solution. But unemployment is no solution, rather it is a tragedy with far-reaching social implications," he said. The internal document, prepared by David Katz, director of manpower planning in the Ministry of Labor, notes that the following workers will suffer most from the increase in unemployment: academics, technicians, youth and women. By sector: construction, industry and services will lay off some 5,000 workers. In the public sector: By June some 4,000 workers will be laid off. Young people and soldiers completing their service who have not yet entered the work force will find that this year it will be even more difficult to find jobs. During 1985, 35,000 young people will enter the labor force and half will be unable to find work. [By Yisrael Tomer] [Text] [Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 7 Feb 85 pp 1, 10]

ANNUAL INCOME DECLARATION PROPOSED--A proposal to require every citizen of the state, from age 18 and up, to submit an annual declaration of income to the income tax authorities was submitted by the organizations of independents. Ya'aqov Werker, chairman of the organizations' tax committee, said in his statement to the director of the State Revenue Administration, Yisra'el Baron, that requiring all citizens to file an annual income declaration is the most efficient way to control the underground economy. Those citizens who would be unable to explain discrepancies in their assets and property would, according to the proposal, have to pay a special tax of 35 percent. [Text] [Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 17 Feb 85 p 2]

LEBANON

COMMUNICATION OBSTACLES FRAGMENT SOUTH LEBANON

Beirut AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI in Arabic No 402, 14-20 Jan 85 pp 74-75

[Article by Edmond Shadid: "Southerners Telephone Abroad Via Israel"]

[Text] The silent telephone in the South has been the talk of the town since 1976. It is an absence that is a presence, the subject of conversation in coffee houses, shops, and in the streets. The people in the South have explored every possibility to end its silence, including lobbying, complaining, and persisting in their efforts to have the proper function of the telephone restored, but it has stayed mute.

What the Southerner asks those who urge him to resist and hold onto the land is: Aren't telephone communications between the South and the rest of Lebanon essential to effective resistance? Other means of communication, TV and radio, for example, notable by their absences in the South, will be discussed later.

Those who ask us to resist and not communicate with the Israelis must know that the majority of the merchants, students and businessmen, old and young, and everyone from Sidon, Tyre, Marj'Uyun, al-Nabatiyah, Hasbayah, and other cities and villages of the western Biqa' have relatives abroad, and look to Israel in order to use the telephone to call abroad to the European, American and African countries. I would remind officials and those who ask us to resist that most mail comes and goes via Israel.

We direct to you, public officials, whatever your position on the right or the left, complaints of the people of the South: Shab'a, isolated in the embrace of Jabal al-Shaykh, Kafr Hamam, Kafr Shuba, Rashayyah al-Fukhkar, Mays al-Jabal, 'Itrun, al-Tayyibah, and the districts of Bint Jubayl, Hasbayyah, Marj'Uyun, al-Nabatiyah, and Western al-Biqa'. These true Lebanese bear heavy expenses and travel long distances, often over dangerous, long-neglected roads to Sidon when the necessity requires the use of a telephone. There, the people crowd around awaiting their turns. Then, often, the news comes that communication with Beirut and other cities has been cut off, triggering a barrage of curses. Should one wish to augment his vocabulary of obscenities, let him listen at the main telephone building in Sidon!

At such moments, the Southerner addresses the following question to those who are responsible or influential: What do you do when your telephone breaks down?

You raise hell, that's what, and why not, when so much depends on it? As a consequence, opportunists, demonstrating an ability superior to that of the state, have constructed a wireless telephone in Sidon and Tyre.

I recently interviewed some people in Nabatiyyah and listened to their complaints.

The head of al-Shaqif's club and director of al-Maqasid Islamic and Charitable Association's nursery, Mr Habib Jabir: "I have chosen the topic of telephone communication in the South and in Al-Nabatiyah, particularly, because it is vital to citizens in the South, obviously including the administrator, physician, pharmacist, merchant, and, of course, the ordinary citizen. I share your noble and constructive effort and I would like to see the concern extended to all communication media: the telephone, official television, and official broadcasts which are the most influential of all as they reach the largest number of people even though they are not consistently received.

"Both information and communication media constitute an indivisible unit in establishing and maintaining contact which is essential for the unity of the country and the people alike. What we are being urged to do via slogans which direct us to resist and hold onto the land is all well and good; but we ask, 'How is it possible for a person to hold on to his land and defend it when the essentials of resistance are denied?'

"One can say that the liberation of the land is of top priority, and that everything will follow that. We hear it often from their safe places, but we must say to them that the land can only be liberated by means that will, at the same time, preserve the interests of the people of the land. Of what good is liberation of the land without liberating the people of that land?

"An unjust reality emerges with negative consequences for our cultural, economic and social conditions: the disappearance of public opinion, dispersion, exile, and emigration have become masters of our present, and all of these are caused by a disparity of information, which puts us in an unfair competitive position, if competition can even exist in a situation such as ours.

"We would like to warn that the enrichment that is imposed on our South deprives us of any way of communicating, and will widen the gap between those who are on the top and those at the bottom, and that the wider the gap, the more factionalism and fragmentation, and consequently, the more elusive unity. We will be traveling willy-nilly on the road the 10-year old conspiracy has designated.

"Words must be matched with deeds. There cannot be a single, unified, independent, Lebanese state without the means to attain it.

"I ask accusatively: Is it right to have information pour on us via media which are not ours or for us?

"Is it true that administrative offices are incapable of correcting the situation because of the prevailing condition in the South?

"Why should I and others have to go from al-Nabatiyah to 'Abra-Sidon or to Tyre to use telephones which belong to ordinary people, and are these individuals thereby superior in some way to the state?

"Let me tell you what happened to our venerable Shaykh 'Abdallah Al-'Alayily. During the period of expanding nationalism in the late 1950s, no one opposed any decree even when it pertained to fateful matters. Because of his belief in truth and his perceptive insight, al-'Alayily raised his voice against a condition which he saw as dangerous and by doing so he created an uproar against him and exposed himself to criticism even from amongst his friends and neighbors.

"Days passed and his prediction came true and those who had blamed him came to take positions identical to his. One day, an earlier critic met him and engaged in a heated conversation after which the old friend said, jokingly, 'Sir, we are all roosters, and roosters usually crow at the crack of dawn, but you cried in the darkness of the night, what a difference between your cry and ours!'

"In the light of our topic we hope that your cry will not be in the darkness of the night, that it will not be in vain, leaving those who sleep undisturbed.

Mr Fawzi 'Ali Ahmad, president of the Egypt and Lebanon Bank said, "In spite of all checkings with those responsible we have no convincing reason for this negligence. The Israeli occupation, land and sea crossings, the difficulty in transporting the equipment, the presence of the broadcasting station in Mount Safi and Israeli control over it are some of the excuses given, which lead us to ask: Why has al-Nabatiyah itself become the victim? Why does the son of al-Nabatiyah and its area pay the price and solely bear the hardships and losses that are the result of this despicable situation? The businessman finds himself obliged to increase the prices far and beyond those which exist in the southern areas, and the consumer is the victim. The pharmacist raises the price of the drugs according to what suits the extraneous costs. The sick cannot get in touch with the hospital or any physician because there is no telephone he can reach even in unexpected urgent situations. Business and banking transactions, the cashing of checks, money orders, and money exchange are all unknown to the citizen except through the newspapers and after the loss of opportunity which puts him in a situation of accepting what the money changers and brokers impose upon him. What hateful isolation this is, and so it will remain until its nightmare has been eliminated from this town and area which were until a time not so far away the focus of attention and the center of the South. How is it possible for it now to become a provincial center to three districts while remaining in semi-isolation from the Lebanese regions and especially from the capital? Those who have capital and projects hold their breath a thousand times before undertaking any vital project, or constructing any economic establishment of any importance. Inquiries, questions, doubts and suspicions await anyone who can solve their mysteries and undue their riddles, but when, where and how?"

Said Safa Jabir, an attorney: "What the city of al-Nabatiyah needs most is the telephone, this instrument which would establish the link between the capital of Jabal 'Amil and other areas of the nation. It is unfortunate that the telephone system was destroyed during the events of the past and has been left in a state of disrepair by authorities until the present time, knowing that al-Nabatiyah constitutes an important commercial center with regard to Marj'Uyun, Hasbayyah, Bint Jubayl, and Jazzin, in addition to the fact that the majority of those who were born in these districts now live in Beirut or abroad, so that it is a matter of necessity for the son to get in touch with his parents, and the brother with his brother, while the businessman needs to contact daily companies he deals with."

"Many of the inhabitants of this area find themselves obligated to go to Beirut in order to reassure themselves about their relatives, or get in touch with relatives abroad.

"The task of repairing the telephone must be considered one of the key elements of resistance and essential for keeping the citizen firmly established on his land; indeed, it is impossible for him to remain firm in his opposition while news of his children and brothers is cut off from him."

Said Mr 'Abd-al-Hasan Sha'ban, mayor of the municipality of al-Nabatiyah: "Strange and odd is the attitude of this government and those which preceded it, as if this area had been erased from the map, in spite of the knowledge that it is the model of co-existence, fraternization and national unity. While the civilized world has reached the moon, discovered many, many things there, and established communication with the earth from the outside world, we in al-Nabatiyah are unable to reach Sidon, which is 25 kilometers away. We have repeatedly talked over the matter with those who are responsible since the telephone was interrupted in 1976, and we have heard many promises ever since, but we remain today disconnected by telephone from the rest of the world. I would like to direct the attention of the representatives of al-Nabatiyah region, to the importance of making a serious and sincere move to address themselves to the solution of this problem, and they, more than any one else, are aware of our condition."

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CSO: 4404/199

LEBANON

LEBANESE POUND SLIDES TO NEW LOW

Beirut AN-NAHAR ARAB REPORT & MEMO in Arabic 4 Feb 85 pp 2-3

[Article by Dr Elias Baroudi]

[Text] On the morning of Friday, 25 January, the U.S.dollar broke all previous records on the Beirut market and climbed to more than LL12/dollar within a short time of the start of trading, an increase nearly 13 per cent on the previous day's closing price. Very soon it was obvious that there was considerable demand for dollars and no sellers, and dealing was unofficially suspended. There were reports, however, that the dollar was sold in a limited number of transactions after that for somewhere between LL13 and LL15.

The panic subsided on Saturday and the market cooled appreciably, especially after it was announced that an emergency cabinet session would be held on 27 January to discuss the situation and to take appropriate measures to halt the downward slide in the value of the Lebanese pound. At the end of trading, the pound had appreciated again, to LL10.6 to the dollar, or by more than 12 per cent.

As was expected by many, however, the cabinet (whose emergency meeting had to be postponed to Monday evening when the Minister of Labour Selim el-Hoss tendered his resignation and had to be convinced to retract it) could not come up with magic short-term remedies for the ailing pound, a fact which was reflected in a renewed drop in exchange value, to LL11.9 to the dollar, on Tuesday.

The media in Lebanon have been unanimous in describing the situation of the pound as "catastrophic" and there have been accusations of "a plot against the Lebanese economy" and calls to limit the activities of currency speculators and to take legal action against them.

Currency speculation has undoubtedly contributed to the weakening of the Lebanese pound and to the sharp fluctuation in its exchange value, particularly that there are many in Lebanon who are adept at this game. But the consistent depreciation of the pound in 1984 leading to its near collapse last week is due to many other factors, some of which are deep-seated and, thus, difficult to overcome in the short run. The most important of these factors may be outlined as follows:

- The political situation in Lebanon is clouded with uncertainty and the overall security situation is, at best, shaky. The country has been rife with rumours in the last few weeks of an impending new round of widespread internecine fighting, which could be sparked off by the first phase of the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon. Even though these rumours may prove to be unfounded or exaggerated, the situation on the ground has not helped to allay fears. The "National Unity" government stands seemingly powerless in the face of the many loopholes and loose ends which have hindered the full implementation of the security plans which were patched up for Beirut, Tripoli and the coastal highway to the south and the mountain area overlooking it. Political divisions seem to be as pronounced as ever and the steps taken towards some form of national reconciliation have been few and tentative. In the atmosphere of gloom and desperation which has prevailed in recent weeks an additional flight of capital has been recorded and wealth-holders have increasingly turned to the dollar as a safe and liquid haven. As the pound continued on its downward trend, the transfer from Lebanese pounds to foreign-currency deposits picked up momentum, thus accentuating the pressures on the pound.
- Lebanon's real GNP has dropped by an estimated 60 per cent since 1975 largely because of the destruction and economic dislocations which have resulted from the repeated bouts of fighting. This decline in GNP has not been accompanied by a parallel drop in the standard of living of a wide cross-section of Lebanese society. In the period up to 1982, this was not a problem since the inflow of capital and remittances from Lebanese working abroad, particularly in the Gulf, and the transfer of funds to the PLO and to various political parties and militias covered the gap between production and expenditure and allowed the country to maintain its high propensity to import of nearly 55 per cent with no adverse effects on the balance of payments. Since then, however, these sources of foreign exchange have either dried up or decreased sharply and Lebanon has been living beyond its means. Merchandise exports have also followed a downward trend in recent years because of production interruptions at home and the fall in demand in Arab markets. For the first time, the balance of payments was in deficit to the tune of \$930mn in 1983 and this deficit increased to \$1.4bn in 1984, or by 50 per cent.

In spite of the deepening recession since the second half of 1983, government spending continued to grow rapidly in 1983 and 1984, thus contributing to an overly rapid growth in the money supply and increasing the rate of inflation, which reached an estimated 30 percent in 1984. The foreign-exchange component of government spending amounted to \$1.33 billion in 1983 and \$763 million in 1984. These sums were provided by the central bank at a time when Lebanon's net foreign exchange earnings were negative. At the end of 1984, Lebanon's foreign-exchange reserves were down to \$620 million as compared to \$1.8 billion at the end of 1983, making it practically impossible for the central bank to engage in currency-support operations--for the time being at least.

In recent weeks, various studies and reports have highlighted the economic difficulties facing Lebanon and these have contributed to the crisis of confidence in the pound. In particular, fears have been expressed by some observers that if the economic situation continues to worsen, Lebanon may be forced sooner or later to adopt foreign-exchange controls. Various government officials, including the prime minister after the last cabinet meeting, have flatly denied this possibility and have stressed Lebanon's continued adherence to the free foreign-exchange system and to its famous banking secrecy law. But the harm has been done and the fears persist.

In the final analysis, and in spite of the last ten years of fighting and destruction, Lebanon's economic situation remains much better than that of many other developing countries. Its external indebtedness is very low and the economy still has inherent reserves and strengths. The collapse of the Lebanese pound is unwarranted on the basis of the economic fundamentals. But a new panic could sweep the foreign-exchange market if widespread fighting erupts once more, or if political developments point to such an eventuality.

Otherwise, the steady depreciation of the pound may be expected to continue if the economic situation worsens further. The implication here is that an improvement in the exchange value of the pound hinges on the successful implementation of the series of measures and policies promised by the government, in addition, of course to an improvement in the political and security situations. These include austerity measures to reduce government spending to an absolute minimum, the collection of back taxes

and duties in a further bid to cut the budget deficit, efforts to obtain aid and long-term soft loans, particularly the remaining \$1.8bn in grants pledged to Lebanon by the Gulf oil-producers at the Tunis summit conference in 1979, and the implementation of various measures to help reactivate the private sector and hence to increase merchandise exports.

Further support for the pound may be provided through the extension of the austerity drive to encompass private consumption expenditure, and this mainly through an increase in Customs' duties on a wide range of imported consumer goods, particularly, luxury items. Foreign manpower also needs to be regulated and reduced to a minimum, since expatriate labour is estimated to cost Lebanon at least \$200mn a year while the country is suffering from high rates of unemployment and disguised unemployment.

CSO: 4400/106

15 April 1985

## SYRIA

## SYRIAN ECONOMIC MEASURES EMPHASIZE DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT

Beirut AN-NAHAR ARAB REPORT &amp; MEMO in Arabic 4 Mar 85 pp 8-11

[Text] Syria has announced a comprehensive series of economic-policy measures, following the recent annual congress of the ruling Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party in Damascus (see box). The formal economic resolutions emerged after long and secretive deliberations from 5 to 20 January, during which the country's recent economic performance came in for severe criticism. Dr Elias Baroudi discusses the new measures:

The resolutions concerning the economy and economic policy read as follows:

"The preparation of a programme to achieve a balance in the national economy in line with the party's overall strategy of defence, development and progress and this on the basis of the following principles:

- Correcting the situation in the public sector and upgrading the quality of its administrative and technical cadres in order to develop its leading role in the national economy.
- Channelling the country's financial surplus to the development effort within the guidelines of the social and economic development plan.
- Encouraging savings and channelling these savings to investment in development projects.
- Rationalising energy use and developing alternatives to oil.
- Balancing revenue with expenditure and production with consumption expenditure.
- Taking measures to increase exports including a study of the possibility of setting an exchange value for the Syrian pound which would encourage exports.
- Placing special emphasis on the agricultural sector and speeding-up the development of this sector through land reclamation and irrigation projects, agricultural mechanization and other projects and efforts.
- Vitalizing the industrial sector and providing it with all the necessary support in order to increase industrial production and exports and to improve the quality of industrial output.
- Promoting mixed enterprises and providing them with all necessary support.
- Encouraging the private sector to contribute to the development of the productive sectors and this within the guidelines of the government's overall plan for the economy.
- Working towards achieving a balance between production, pricing and wage policies."

The resolutions are undoubtedly broad in nature and outline general policy guidelines for the economy rather than dwell on specific goals and targets. In many respects, however, they serve to underline the various difficulties facing the Syrian economy to the extent that an understanding of their relevance and significance may hinge on a study of recent developments in the economy and of the dislocations which it faces. The emphasis on the need to increase savings, to balance consumption with production, to channel the financial surplus into development investment and to increase exports must be understood in the light of the reportedly serious shortage of foreign exchange which Syria faced in 1984, as well as the shortfall in development finance.

In the period since 1980 at least, Syria has followed a policy of retrenchment in public spending and increasingly tight budgets. This policy was made necessary by the inherent weaknesses in Syria's socialist oriented economy, the considerable outlays on defence, which are an essential counterpart to the country's hardline political stance, and the fact that the flow of Arab aid to Syria has been less than what is required. At the Arab Summit meeting in Baghdad in November, 1978, the Arab oil producing countries pledged Syria \$1.8 billion in aid annually to support it in its confrontation with Israel. The amount of aid actually received, however, is estimated at \$1.6bn in 1979, around \$1.3bn-\$1.4bn in 1980 and lower than that in subsequent years. It may be inferred from various sources that Syria was in need of a total of \$2.9 billion in foreign aid in 1983 to meet its budgeted current and development expenditures fully, which is much less than the amount of aid actually received --- though this is not known with any degree of accuracy --- and the situation cannot have improved in 1984. In part, the slowdown in Arab aid to Syria was due to the increasing strains in its relations with Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia starting in 1980 when Syria came out in full support of Iran. The decline in the revenues of the oil producers since 1981-1982 has also played an important role in this respect.

Arab aid aside, Syria's foreign exchange earnings were also adversely affected in recent years by the slump in the market for its three main exports, namely oil, phosphates and cotton (though cotton prices improved again in 1983).

Syria is a very small producer and exporter of oil by Arab standards. Its crude is heavy and of low quality and production dropped from 171,000 b/d in 1978 to an average of around 165,000 b/d in 1981-83. The fall in oil prices has also resulted in a considerable fall in oil revenues, as shown in Table 1. This is particularly significant since exports of crude oil and lubricants accounted for an average of 77 per

cent of Syria's merchandise exports in 1981-82. To make matters worse, Syria is forced to import crude for refining because its own heavy crude is not suitable for this purpose. In 1984, crude imports amounted to around ten million tons and the resolution to "rationalise" energy use and to develop alternatives to oil should be understood in this light.

The oil industry received a considerable boost recently by the promising discovery of light crude of 32-36° API in Deir el-Zor in the north of the country by a Shell-Pecten-Deminex consortium which was awarded a production-sharing concession in 1983. Initial estimates put the field's probable output at 300,000 b/d, but it soon turned out that this was a considerable over-estimate. While additional exploration work is still going on, it was reported early in 1985 that the first producer-well drilled in the field flowed at the rate of 7,000 b/d, though again this figure has not been confirmed to date. In any case, the new oil discovery cannot be expected to have any effect on Syria's foreign exchange earnings in the short-run and until the field is fully explored, developed and put on stream.

Table 1  
Syria - Crude Oil Reserves,  
Production and Exports, 1977-1983

| Year | Proven Reserves<br>(Billion barrels<br>end of year) | Crude Production<br>(Thousand b/d) | Oil Exports<br>(\$ million) |
|------|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1977 | 2.2   | 174                                | 621                         |
| 1978 | 2.1   | 171                                | 658                         |
| 1979 | 2.0   | 166                                | 1,134                       |
| 1980 | 1.9   | 158                                | 1,334                       |
| 1981 | 1.9   | 164                                | 1,661                       |
| 1982 | 1.5   | 164                                | 1,511                       |
| 1983 | 1.5   | 168                                | 1,000                       |

Source: Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, *Annual Report*, (1982 and 1983).

In view of the limitations which Syria's oil industry has faced in recent years, at least before the latest oil discovery, there was a revival of interest in cotton which was Syria's main export until 1974, when oil exports started, and is still the main cash crop, accounting for an average of around seven per cent of export earnings in the period from 1981 to 1983. The resolution to place special emphasis on the development of the agricultural sector may be understood partly in this light, though it must be said that Sy-

Table 2  
Syria - Investment Targets Under the Fifth Five-Year Plan by Sector

|  | Public Sector |       | Private, Cooperative and Joint Sectors |       | (Million Syrian Pounds) |       |
|--|---------------|-------|--|-------|-------------------------|-------|
|  | Amount        | %     | Amount                                 | %     | Amount                  | %     |
| Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries       | 15,500        | 19.2  | 1,700                                  | 8.2   | 17,200                  | 16.9  |
| Extraction Industry                      | 4,404         | 5.5   | 150                                    | 0.7   | 4,554                   | 4.5   |
| Transformation Industry                  | 10,854        | 13.4  | 1,500                                  | 7.2   | 12,354                  | 12.2  |
| Electricity, Gas & Water                 | 10,105        | 12.5  | —                                      | —     | 10,105                  | 10.0  |
| Construction and Building                | 1,828         | 2.3   | 747                                    | 3.6   | 2,575                   | 2.5   |
| Trade                                    | 2,407         | 3.0   | 593                                    | 2.9   | 3,000                   | 3.0   |
| Transport, Communications and Storage    | 11,350        | 14.0  | 1,450                                  | 7.0   | 12,800                  | 12.6  |
| Finance, Insurance and Lands             | 4,061         | 5.0   | 14,320                                 | 69.2  | 18,381                  | 18.1  |
| Collective, Social and Personal Services | 20,288        | 25.1  | 245                                    | 1.2   | 20,533                  | 20.2  |
|  | 80,797        | 100.0 | 20,705                                 | 100.0 | 101,502                 | 100.0 |

Source: Fifth Five Year Economic and Social Development Plan of the Syrian Arab Republic 1981-1985

Syria's increasing concern with the agricultural sector, after a long period of neglect, goes back a few years now, particularly that a drive to reverse the fall in cotton production started in 1981. The agricultural sector was allocated nearly 17 per cent of total investment outlays under the fifth Five-Year Plan (1981-1985), as compared with ten per cent for manufacturing industry, though it is not clear to what extent the plan's various investment targets have been met to date.

Agricultural development in this and the next decade will undoubtedly centre on the Euphrates Dam Scheme which is planned to bring an additional 640,000 hectares under permanent irrigation by 2000. Around 340,000 hectares of the total area to be irrigated by the scheme have been developed so far, according to some reports. In all, the Euphrates Dam Scheme will benefit primarily agricultural areas in the north-eastern provinces of Raqqa, Hasakeh and Deir el-Zor which have been relatively neglected.

Syria's cotton output amounted to 323,000 tonnes in 1980-81 as compared with 414,000 tonnes in 1975, but 1983 was a bumper crop year with output reaching 433,000 tonnes and average yields rising to a record level of 3,000 kilograms per hectare. This achievement, however, proved to be rather precarious as output dropped again by around 100,000 tonnes in 1984 both because of the fall in yields and the drop in the area allocated to the crop, from an estimated 175,000 hectares in 1983 to 173,500 hectares in 1984. The increase in production from 1980-81 to 1983 was achieved through an expansion in the irrigated area, the use of new seed strains and better incentives offered to cotton farmers by the Supreme Agricultural Board which buys the crop. But the

poor performance in 1984 points to the fact that the achievements made in this respect are still precarious, particularly that the fall in production in 1984 was reportedly due to insufficient pest-control measures and unfavourable weather in some of the growing areas.

Generally it may be said that Syrian agriculture suffers from many constraints and that considerable efforts are still needed to modernize it and to realise its full potential, which is quite large. Some of these constraints have been blamed on bureaucratic bungling and shortcomings. A good example of this is the delay in the completion of the dam on the Al-Kabir river in Latakia Province. This dam, which is designed to irrigate 14,000 hectares, was originally planned for completion in 1980, while the associated irrigation and drainage network was to be finished in 1982. Because of bureaucratic delays and some technical difficulties, however, the dam itself is now not expected to be completed before 1985-86.

Syria's industrial sector, which the Ba'ath Congress has resolved to vitalize and support, also suffers from many problems and inefficiencies and industrial production has been stagnant. The oldest-established manufacturing industries in Syria are those producing cotton yarn and fabrics, silk and woollen fabrics, knitwear and hosiery. In 1983 there were 21 cotton-ginning factories, with the largest in Hassake having a capacity of 35,000 tonnes a year. Other industries include cement, with a capacity of around two million tonnes, iron and steel, food processing toiletries, beverages, electrical products, footwear and leather goods and a range of handicraft industries.

Generally, the growth of Syrian industry has followed a pattern now familiar in many developing countries, namely import substitution with recourse to various protection measures. The result is that many industries are now heavily dependent on protection for survival. In their zeal to bring about a rapid growth in industrial capacity and output, Syrian planners have made some expensive mistakes in the recent past. A \$100mn paper mill utilising straw as a raw material was completed in 1979, but it was

later realised that Syria produces hardly enough straw to operate the mill.

A considerable investment was also made in a sugar beet processing plant with a capacity of 1.6mn tonnes of sugar beet a year which was completed in the late 1970s. In 1980-83, however, Syria produced an average of not more than 500,000 tonnes of sugar beet a year.

Recently there were also reports that the cement plant at Tartous was forced to cut production from 5,000 tonnes to 2,500 tonnes a day because of delays in the completion of a special unit at the plant to cover cement bags with plastic to make them ready for export.

The involvement of the private sector in manufacturing industry could help to make it more efficient and competitive. The question is, however, how far will the private sector be allowed to go on "[contributing] to the development of the productive sectors"?

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

PLANNING MINISTRY DETAILS 1983 ECONOMIC FIGURES

Beirut AL-IQTISAD WA AL-A'MAL in Arabic Feb 85 p 57

[Text] According to a study by the Ministry of Planning, GDP realized an annual growth rate of 28.8 percent between 1972-1983. GDP rose from 6,449,000,000 billion dirhams in 1972 to 104,095,000,000 dirhams in 1983, an increase of more than 16 fold.

The study shows that the economic sectors other than the crude oil sector realized a growth rate characteristic of that for the crude oil sector. The former had an annual growth rate of 24.1 percent, compared to 24.2 percent for crude oil, during the period mentioned. The per capita share of educational and health services and other services rose from 3,000 dirhams in 1972 to 17,000 dirhams in 1983.

Likewise, per capita income from GDP rose from 20,200 dirhams in 1972 to 84,600 dirhams in 1983, and the per capita share of investment expenditure rose from 5,400 dirhams in 1972 to 25,100 dirhams in 1983. The growth rate in the manufacturing industry sector was 42.1 percent annually; in the financial and insurance sector, 53.6 percent annually; and in the building and construction sector, 34.9 percent annually, during the same period. The volume of fixed investment rose from 1.7 billion dirhams in 1972 to approximately 30 billion dirhams in 1983, an increase of more than 17 fold at an annual average of approximately 29.7 percent.

The study mentioned that investment as a percentage of GDP for 1982 was about 28.9 percent per year, a comparatively high figure for both developing and developed nations. Government investment rose from 612 million dirhams in 1972 to 8.9 billion dirhams in 1983, an annual growth rate of 37.5 percent, compared to an annual growth rate of 30.7 percent for private and government sector activities.

As for final consumption, it realized a high growth rate of 35.2 percent for government consumption, and about 36.7 percent for private consumption between 1972-1983. Moreover, the volume of expenditure, in its current and investment breakdown, multiplied by more than 23 recognized kinds, and realized an annual growth rate of 23.2 percent. This is due to the spread of health and education services and other services, in addition to an improvement in the quality of these services. Investment expenditure multiplied more than 11 fold during this period, realizing an annual growth rate of 24.8 percent.

AFGHANISTAN

CAMPAIGN TO FREE PHYSICIST AKHBARI

Rome ADNKRONOS in Italian 17 Jan 85 unpaginated

[Article: Another "Sakharov Case" in Afghanistan]

[Text] Pressure is building in Kabul these days behind the campaign to free physicist Akhari, sentenced to death last year by a special tribunal in Kabul.

The committee formed to publicize a campaign for freeing the "Afghan Sakharov" has mobilized support from all quarters, with pledges of support from British, French, German, Dutch, Belgian, and Swiss scientists. Professor Zichichi personally interceded for his Afghan colleague, but his request, like all the others, have fallen on deaf ears. The Committee to Free Akhbari now plans to ask British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to intervene through diplomatic channels with the Karmal government to obtain the physicist's safety and freedom.

Meanwhile, messages seeking support for the only nuclear scientist Afghanistan can boast have been sent to United Nations Secretary General Perez de Quellar and to the chairman of the UN Commission for Human Rights, and a petition to spare the life of the young physicist has been addressed to Karmal himself. Amnesty International is working in London to win support from the [European] Atomic Energy Commission as well.

Muhammad Akhbari, a 1971 graduate of Moscow University, had been lecturing at Kabul University, and later at Jalalabad University.

In 1979 he was accused of belonging to the Marxist-Leninist Movement there, which opposed the pro-Soviet dictatorial regime, and suspended from all assignments. In 1981 and 1982 he was arrested several times and held without ever being specifically charged. Then in 1984 he was charged in the course of a trial with receiving funds from the Chinese government to be used to finance subversive action against the Karmal regime.

It has not been possible to follow the vicissitudes of the Afghan Sakharov since his trial, because, after he was given the death sentence (it is not known whether or not it has been carried out) a veil of silence has been drawn over his fate.

It is the opinion of those who are working to save his life that Akhbari is still in prison, and that his liberation might perhaps be facilitated should the physicist agree to go into permanent exile.

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CSO: 8028/0898E

AFGHANISTAN

COOPERATIVES ROLE TO ENHANCE NATIONAL ECONOMY

Kabul ANIS in Dari 12 Feb 85 p 2

[Text] The splendid Sawr Revolution, produced a major turn in the history of our country. For the first time political power was transferred from the ruling oppressor class to the PDPA, which is the representative of workers, peasants and other toilers.

As the sincere protector of the vast toiling masses of the country, the PDPA has the responsibility of insuring the realization of the welfare and well-being of the working people and faithfully carrying out its responsibilities in obtaining this important national goal. The victory of the new phase of the revolution has, more than any time before, brought about conditions favorable to the finalization and achievement of creative, sincere activities to insure the people's welfare.

Babrak Karmal, general secretary of the PDPA Central Committee spoke at length about the solution of the land problem in the country as the most important role in our national economic development during the first congress of Agricultural Cooperatives, a portion of which we quote: "In present conditions, agriculture is the basis of the country's economy and the peasants constitute the majority of our society."

According to scientific and our Islamic belief, land must belong to those who cultivate it and work on it. It is only in this way that the question of land can be resolved fairly and in true humanitarian manner.

Development of agriculture and changing the sector into a developed and progressive one and the elimination of the poverty and backwardness of the vast masses of peasants are inseparably linked with a fair solution to land distribution. Undoubtedly, the new social and economic organization of the country's villages will be created in the second stage of land reforms which will continue for several years.

Land reforms are taking place to the benefit of the country's oppressed and toiling peasants with due consideration to customs, habits, traditions and traditions of our people. Our party has announced the principle of ownership and the new legal interpretation of land and intends to observe them without deviation."

Babruk Karmal provides us with this guideline regarding the new land distribution: "New land distribution, too, will rest on the principle that peasants have the necessary land in order to provide for an orderly life for themselves and their families and to fully benefit from the product of their labor.

In the second phase of land reforms, therefore, necessary measures will be decided upon and put into effect in order to regulate land use matters that will follow so that the new land distribution could create suitable conditions for improving the standard of living of peasants and increasing their agricultural output."

The leader of the party has frankly and explicitly stressed the serious need for the creation of agricultural cooperatives in hamlets and villages of the country in these words: "In regulating new social relationships in villages we really need agricultural cooperatives, consider them of great importance and consider such cooperatives as among the most important means of strengthening the political unity and the up-grading of the social and class awareness peasants and agricultural workers of the country.

Agricultural cooperatives must help in improving the living conditions of peasants, agricultural workers and local tradesmen, to create the necessary facilities to provide their needs of industrial products, to improve the marketing of agricultural products and to increase the output of cottage industries. Thus the unity of peasants with the cooperatives would, first of all, be to improve their own standard of living as well as help the agricultural growth of Afghanistan and the making of the sector into an up-to-date, modern and highly productive one. We are fully convinced that without the growth and expansion of agricultural cooperatives, the rapid elimination of our country's backwardness in agriculture is not possible.

It must be emphasized that the cooperatives, as a union of aware and voluntary peasants, will result in increasing the level of their awareness, expanded initiatives, development of democracy, ample scientific experience, administrative skill and the bringing together of peasants and tradespeople in social and political affairs.

In this way, the activities of cooperatives, parallel with the implementation of economic and political goals in the DRA, will help in enhancing the national economy and the improvement of social conditions in our country."

Since at its present stage the Sawr Revolution is endowed with deep national and democratic character, the PDPA and the DRA government, therefore, "perceive the cooperatives as the most important means for organizing the mass and class-oriented toiling peasants and mobilization of their forces not only for expanding production but also as valuable in defense of the revolution." It goes without saying that the creation of agricultural cooperatives in rural areas of the country is recognized as an important element in increased farming output and the development of the national economy.

AFGHANISTAN

ATTEMPTS UNDERWAY TO IMPROVE, STABILIZE ESSENTIAL GOODS PRICES

Kabul HEYWAD in Dari 14 Feb 85 p 2

[Text] Babrak Karmal, general secretary of the Central Committee of the PDPA and chairman of the DRA Revolutionary Council stated at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the PDPA Central Committee: "The problem of setting and stabilizing prices coupled with the supply of adequate essential goods for the people is one of the fundamental matters receiving the attention of our party and government. Although measures have been taken by the Council of Ministers in this regard and while, compared with similar countries and the general crisis in capitalist countries, the supply of essential goods needed by people and the prices of commodities are relatively stable but the question of resolving the problem of preventing price jumps, improving the pricing system and stabilizing prices requires serious, precise, sympathetic and continuous work."

Solving the problem of prices and stabilizing them to the benefit of the masses as well as providing adequate supplies of essential goods is not an easy task in a country like revolutionary Afghanistan where imperialism and reaction, led by the U.S., direct evil efforts toward the economic blockade of our country and resort to economic banditry by destroying our economic institutions, our roads, bridges, motor transports and reserves in order to put our toiling people in a bind. It is for this very reason that our revolutionary party and government are devoting such serious and all-out effort to insure the interests of the vast strata of our people.

In order to prevent price increases, insure the availability of essential goods at stable prices and in order to counteract the undesirable effects of the economic crisis of capitalist countries on prices in the country, the DRA revolutionary government seeks to attain the above mentioned objectives by setting up extensive networks of state and cooperative shops and expanding the chain of retail stores. In line with this, and in addition to the network of state shops operating as part of the government, a new state retail authority was established in the second half of the current year [which ended 20 March 1985], with a number of its shops already functioning. In addition, about 140 cooperative shops have thus far been opened where essential goods and commodities are made available to people at fixed prices of up to 20 percent below free market rates.

Moreover, another point to which reference was made at another meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the PDPA was the strengthening of the state-run wholesale trade, a matter that needed study since this would provide better possibilities of supplying goods needed by people at fixed prices.

Another interesting point is the need to get wide public support for price controls in the free market. In addition to the Inspection Bureau of Kabul Municipality, citizen price control committees have been set up and are functioning in the city's eleven sectors, with good results so far. The committees which are made up of members from a wide range of people have stabilized prices in the free market to a certain degree and prevented price jumps.

5854

CSO: 4665/40

15 April 1985

## AFGHANISTAN

## FARMERS ASSISTED TO MECHANIZE AGRICULTURE

Kabul HEYWAD in Dari 12 Feb 85 p 2

[Text] The extensive, basic and progressive changes which are taking place in our beautiful and historic revolutionary Afghanistan following the victory of the savior Sawr Revolution to the benefit of the toiling masses of the country, are not only the guarantors of the welfare and well-being of our courageous and patriotic people but at the same time insure the rapid economic and social growth and expansion of our nation.

Since agriculture is the most important sector wherein more than 85 percent of the toiling masses of the country are engaged, the same ratio of importance and all-out attention has been accorded to this area by the PDPA and the revolutionary DRA government which, in order to bring about deep and progressive transformations in the agricultural sector parallel with democratic water and land reforms to the benefit of landless and near-landless peasants and with the aim of changing outmoded traditional ways of farming--considered the main factor contributing to the backwardness of agriculture and agricultural output--, are concentrating on utilization of agro-technical achievements and the mechanization of farming and constantly seeking to further this aim.

The mechanization of agriculture is a major means of increasing farm output, relieving peasants of the hard labor involved and most importantly increasing the growth and development of the awareness level of the peasants and making them united with the workers.

Because of the importance of agricultural mechanization our revolutionary government has recently created the Department of Agricultural Mechanization within the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reform and provided it with necessary funds for opening agricultural stations equipped with a variety of agricultural machinery, and of course in all this the unsullied help of the Soviet Union has played a major role

As a result of the activities of the above-mentioned department, the extensive work of agricultural mechanization has now brought about the opening of five main mechanized agriculture stations in the provinces of Kabul, Balkh, Herat, Jowzjan and Baghlan and the use of four mechanized agriculture units in the provinces of Samangan, Ghazni, Kunduz and Farah. The stations have a variety of agricultural machinery such as tractors,

combines, cultivators, seed and fertilizer spreaders and incubators and their necessary equipment are available to farmers at insignificant rental charges.

The increased revenue and the expanded activities of these stations are indicative of the strong desire of the country's farmers in the ever-increasing use of agricultural equipment in farming, so that in 1359 [21 March 1980-20 March 1981] showed a revenue of 4 million afghani involving 9,275 hectares while 1362 [21 March 1983-20 March 1984] showed a revenue of 22.2 million afghani involving 55,933 hectares.

It should be noted however that the present operational capacity of the mechanized stations can in no way meet the ever increasing needs of our farmers. Consequently, a protocol was signed not long ago between Afghani and Soviet authorities under which Soviet aid in expanding the capacities of mechanized stations and in mechanizing the agriculture of our country generally, will assume wider dimensions--the availability of such increased mechanized agricultural services to farmers providing the base for increased farm output and more importantly increased growth and expansion of the national economy of our country.

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CSO: 4665/44

AFGHANISTAN

IMPROVED SEEDS TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO FARMERS

Kabul HEYWAD in Dari 13 Feb 85 p 4

[Text] The Improved Seed Authority which is responsible for providing the needs of farmers throughout the country has planned to put into effect at the appropriate time a number of measures besides the supply of improved seed during the coming year [beginning 21 March 1985].

A source at the Improved Seed Company gave the following additional information regarding planned activities for the coming year: In addition to its plans for increased research in the supply and production of improved seeds, this company hopes that, besides boosting vegetable production at central state farms, it will be able to set up tomato juice plants and to build a greenhouse for raising various saplings and vegetable plants needed by vegetable growers in Kabul Province. The company also plans to set up a chicken ranch that would supply the egg needs of Kabul city and to expand areas of improved vegetable seed cultivation.

The company source when asked the amount of improved seed that would be available according to plan in the coming year, responded: The company plans on 15,000 tons of various strains of wheat, 4,800 tons cotton, 400 kilograms vegetable seed and 2 million vegetable plants for farmers throughout the country.

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CSO: 4665/44

AFGHANISTAN

LAND DEEDS DISTRIBUTED AMONG FARMERS

Kabul ANIS in Dari 14 Feb 85 p 1

[Text] As a result of the all-out efforts of employees of the provincial council of the National Fatherland Front of Badghis, work projects were carried out in the quarter ending 21 December 1984, involving 2,100 persons who worked 5 hours each.

The chores undertaken voluntarily included cleaning up and renovating the interior of Shahr-e Qal'ah Now, repairing schools, painting mosques, cleaning and dredging the Ghour Mach water stream, providing a revenue of 400,000 afghani.

In stating the above, an official of the economic and social services department of the provincial council of the National Fatherland Front of Badghis referred to the participation of representatives of the council with land and water reform operational groups by saying: The council has assigned two of its representatives to the operational groups, these representatives were able to distribute 80 land ownership deeds to landless and near-landless peasants in the Morghab district and the surrounding villages.

The provincial council of the National Fatherland Front of Badghis has also assigned 4 representatives to the municipality to take part in price control work in the market. The source gave this information on meetings and gatherings which took place in the third quarter of the year ending 21 December 1984: During five meetings and gatherings organized by the provincial council of the National Fatherland Front of Badghis and participated in by a large number of peasants and residents of the region, the humane objectives of the party, government and the National Fatherland Front were explained and discussions took place on how to get more people to join peasant cooperatives.

The source said: The provincial council of the National Fatherland Front of Badghis completed 6 forms for prisoners and sent them for finalization to the Central Council of the National Fatherland Front.

Speaking of the creation of peasant cooperatives on the province level, the source said: As a result of extensive orientation and sustained effort, the

provincial council of the National Fatherland Front of Badghis has been able to form 3 consumer and 2 peasant cooperatives and an agricultural cooperative in which 900 are members; this was done during the quarter ending 21 December 1984.

The official added: There are also three domestic relations commissions on the Badghis provincial council level which, in the same quarter, managed to settle family disputes which would have otherwise resulted in the separation of the parties concerned.

Moreover, the provincial council has set up two voluntary groups which have carried out work assignments such as the cleaning of streets, ditches and roads and providing drinking water supplies in respective sectors.

The source added: Operating under the provincial council of the National Fatherland Front of Baghdis are three mixed advisory groups of parents in schools and lycees to resolve difficulties which may arise between students and teachers.

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CSO: 4665/40

AFGHANISTAN

HELMAND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES CONTINUE IN PROVINCES

Kabul HEYWAD in Dari 15 Feb 85 p 2

[Text] In the 9 months ending 2 December 1984 the Helmand Construction Unit continued its work in the capital and the provinces, its activities concentrated on the following important and basic sectors: renovation and construction work related to the revitalization of dams and irrigation facilities that were part of the government's development plans; construction of buildings for civil, residential, health and transport uses and others.

A source at the Helmand Construction Unit stated the foregoing during a talk with the correspondent of HEYWAD and responded to a number of other questions by saying: The revenue of the Helmand Construction Unit in early spring of 1984, according to a financial assessment which was agreed upon by the Ministry of Finance of the DRA, came to a total of 494 million afghani. Later another 10 million afghani was added to it for the Kandahar spinning mill project. Thus the total revenue came to 505 million afghani. Fortunately, according to estimated 9-month activities, the revenue in this 9-month period has exceeded 449 million and it is expected to top 500 million by 20 March 1985.

The source then enumerated the major construction project carried out by the Helmand Construction Unit during the year ending 20 March 1985 by saying: There have been numerous projects but, in brief, those undertaken were: Juy-e Shirdeh Khodaydad dam fall, Hud Khel, Alaoddin reservoirs, the Kamaz Institute project, machine tool plant project, Ministry of Irrigation project, Renovation projects, Veterinary clinic center building, Tarmimat and Afshar homes, 200-bed Police hospital clinic, meeting hall and dining hall of the Council of Ministers, Revolutionary Council building, building project of the Ministry of Higher and Vocational Education, Vazirabad drainage facility, Kandahar spinning mill drainage facility, Helmand drainage canals as well as those of the state farm at Khaseh Paz, etc.

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CSO: 4665/40

AFGHANISTAN

THOUSANDS REGISTER IN LITERACY COURSES

Kabul HEYWAD in Dari 12 Feb 85 p 2

[Text] During 9 months of the current year [ending 20 March 1985] 2,976 toilers in Jowzjan Province were new enrollees in literacy courses and more than 100 graduated from these courses.

As a result of extensive activities carried out in this period in Jowzjan Province to totally eliminate illiteracy, 140 new courses have been set up in various parts of the province including 13 courses with 294 students in Aqcheh district, 11 courses with 200 enrollees in Sar-e Pol district, 10 courses with 217 enrollees in Sang-e Charak district and the remaining of these courses were given in various villages of Shabarghan city.

The source added: As a result of the opening of these courses there are now 428 courses with the participation of 8,372 students in Jowzjan Province.

In addition, 1,143 women of Jowzjan Province are learning to read and write in their residential sector literacy courses.

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CSO: 4665/44

AFGHANISTAN

FIGHTING REPORTEDLY ESCALATES AS WINTER RECEDES

Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 6 Mar 85 p 1

[Text]

NEW DELHI (DPA) -- Heavy fighting raged in several parts of Afghanistan with the decline of winter in the past few weeks, with the Mujahideen, or rebel fighters, claiming hundreds of Afghan regime and Soviet casualties, Western diplomatic sources reported here yesterday.

One of the severest battles occurred around Barikot in the east, where several Soviet soldiers were reportedly killed in an attempt to relieve a garrison from Mujahideen siege.

According to the sources, about a dozen Soviet tanks and seven armoured personnel carriers were destroyed in the fighting.

Heavy fighting was also reported from near Ghazni, in southern Afghanistan, where 11 Soviet and Afghan soldiers were said to have been killed last month.

Kandahar, the country's second-largest city, was reported by these sources to be largely under Mujahideen control, with the Soviets engaged in skirmishes around the city in a bid to gain a breakthrough.

In the north 45 Afghan soldiers were killed in Jizjan Province, with reports of commando operations and ambushes coming in from Panjshir and Badakshan.

The capital city of Kabul was also far from quiet, and one person was reported killed and 15 wounded in a bomb explosion in a gunpowder factory on February 28. The explosion was confirmed by the government-owned television, which described it as an "accidental fire."

CSO: 4600/353

AFGHANISTAN

BRIEFS

CONSUMER COOPERATIVES IN NANGARHAR, GHAZNI--Recently a consumer cooperative named "Darreh-e Now" was inaugurated in a ceremony in Nangarhar Province. The cooperative has been created with an initial capital of 260,000 afghani and a membership of 52 persons. Another cooperative named "Al-Biruni" was opened during a ceremony in the central sector of Ghazni. This cooperative which was created with an initial capital of 116,500 afghani has a membership of 233 persons. [Text] [Kabul DEHQAN in Dari 7 Feb 85 p 2] 5854

LAND DEEDS DISTRIBUTED--Recently 138 landless and near-landless peasants of Bagram district of Parwan Province became landowners. At a meeting, which was held with the participation of a large number of residents of the villages concerned to distribute the relevant land deeds, a number of the peasants expressed appreciation for the progressive measures of the government and pledged to do their utmost in realizing the high ideals of the Sawr Revolution and in defending the country and the revolution. [Text] [Kabul DEHQAN in Dari 7 Feb 85 p 2] 5854

CSO: 4665/43/A

IRAN

SAIRI CHIEF: ALL-OUT STRUGGLE UNTIL DOWNFALL OF IRAQI REGIME

Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 17 Feb 85 p 3

[Text] At the beginning of the fifth session of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI) yesterday morning, the chief of SAIRI explained in a press conference with Iranian and foreign reporters the position of the Iraqi Muslim fighters in confronting the Zionist regime of Iraq.

He called Saddam's pardon order for the opposition deceitful and said: "This claim is not new, Saddam has made such fabricated promises before too."

Hojjat ol-Eslam Mahmud Hashemi, first, in regard to the recent claim of the Iraqi regime about the pardon for the opposition said: "The Muslim nation of Iraq is aware of the deceitful promises and propaganda and this promise is prompted by the instinct to identify and return those opposed to the criminal Ba'th regime." He said: "These propaganda tricks started simultaneously with the beginning of the fifth session of SAIRI and a little after the conference of the Iraqi combatant organizations since the Ba'th regime of Iraq knows that SAIRI is able to call together all the anti-Iraqi regime groups. The demagogue Iraqi regime has proved this point since Saddam's order does not include political prisoners of the Iraqi regime and those prisoners detained before the issuance of this order. If the Iraqi regime was truly not intending to deceive its opposition and fighters it must release those, who even based on the oppressive rules of this regime, do not have any proven guilt from the beginning. Those prisoners except for their faith in the basis of Islam, the Quran, and opposition to the self-centered Saddam rule, have not committed any crime."

Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi then referred to the conference for the studies of Saddam's crimes held last year in Tehran and said: "In this conference fighters, scholars, and researchers have studied and discussed Saddam's crimes and treacheries within the boundaries of Islam and the Iraqi nation and country. They have proved that the Iraqi regime must not be called a political government which rules the land and people since this regime in reality is a criminal clique, an organization that does not even have the specification of a materialistic and anti-religious government, since it does not practice its own created laws and regulations. They use the laws for the advancement of their ferocious temptations and desires."

The SAIRI chief talked about the current baseless decisions and laws in Iraq and said: "Even the members of the Ba'ath ruling party are not immune from the danger of Saddam's bloody purges, and the Ba'ath party in a short time might become discredited by Saddam and annihilated. SAIRI makes it its duty to continue its all out struggle and confrontation against the Ba'ath regime of Iraq until the downfall of this tyrant's regime through solidarity with all the loyal groups and fighters."

Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi in response to a foreign correspondent about the time of the downfall of the Ba'athist Saddam's regime due to the Iraqi people's fight against the regime said: "Based on the promises of the Quran and Islam the victory over the oppressors is unavoidable but in a political campaign you cannot set a time. The logical and scientific proofs for the victory of the Muslim fighters of Iran over the previous regime exists. Certainly there are evident indications of the knowledge and determination of the nation of Iraq and we are hopeful that the fight against the Ba'ath organization of Saddam will be widespread."

The chief of SAIRI then in response to the question of another reporter analyzed the efforts of this assembly in regard to the solidarity of all the opposition and fighting forces of Iraq among them the Kurds of northern Iraq and said: "SAIRI has been able both in the leadership cadre and its organization to gather all the Islamic movement groups and draw up the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iraq and to strengthen existing correlations among anti-Iraqi regime fighters and advance in the desired direction."

At the conclusion he again emphasized that Saddam's pardon order for the opposition is deceitful. "The Ba'athist regime has issued similar pardon orders like amnesty for military deserters and Kurds and did not remain loyal to anyone. The people of Iraq are aware of the nature of these orders and realize the real intention behind these promises. Under no condition would an Iraqi fighter believe in this pardon and he will not succumb to the Ba'athist executioner. Since the fighters have succeeded in escaping from the claws of the regime with their own efforts they are not going to endanger themselves with these promises again."

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CSO: 4640/417

IRAN

MAJLIS EXAMINES NEW YEAR'S BUDGET

Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 19 Feb 85 pp 26, 2

[Text] KEYHAN political service. The open session of the Majlis was held this morning.

In this session, following the recitation of verses from the Koran and the reminders of the representatives to the executive officials, the national budget bill for the period 21 March 1985-20 March 1986 was examined and discussed.

Seyyed Abolhasan Ha'erizadeh, the speaker of the plan and budget committee, explaining the 1985-86 budget bill, said: In the budget bill, some of the items and expenditures were omitted and some were added in order for the government to be able to gain these revenues and for the executive officials and the Majlis committees to scrutinize more carefully the quality of the investments so that more effective measures are taken in the growth of the economy and the essential changes in the organizations of the society.

He added: Here you see the positive and rather successful steps by the plan and budget committee to reduce the current funds from 2,762 billion rials to 2,567 billion rials, a decrease of about 194 billion rials, which are presented to you on Page 7 under the heading, A Summary of Current and Developmental Budget Changes.

The changes have reduced the ceiling for developmental funds from about 1,120 billion rials in the government bill to 1,071 billion rials proposed by the plan and budget committee, a decrease of about 35 billion rials [as published]. The details of these changes and the current and developmental funds are on the following pages.

Current funds and comparisons in every category have been altered and revised. The budget bill, with the opinions approved by the

committee and the levels of increase or decrease are printed on the right hand side of Page 3.

The speaker of the committee continued: In this budget bill, efforts have been made to complete all the incomplete projects in the country as soon as possible and new projects will not be implemented unless they are urgent.

The speaker of the plan and budget committee then explained about the 1985-86 national budget bill and said: This bill, which was referred to us as the main committee, was examined regularly fromm 5 December 1984 to 7 February 1985 in the presence of numerous experts and officials of the ministries and affiliated organizations and is presented to the Majlis along with improvements and changes.

**Single Article:** In the 1985-86 national budget bill, the revenues and other sources of fund procurement total 6,914,373,799,000 rials and expenditures and other payments total 6,914,373,799,000 rials.

A. The general budget of the government during the 1985-86 period, in terms of revenues and other sources of fund procurement and in terms of expenditures and other sources of fund procurement, and in terms of expenditures and other payments, amounts to 3,898,222,205,000 rials, which was approved as follows.

1. The general revenues and other sources of fund procurement amount to 3,638,739,535,000 rials and the expenditures and other payments from that source amount to 3,638,739,535,000 rials.

2. The special revenues of ministries and government organizations amount to 259,482,670,000 rials and expenditures and other payments from that source amount to 259,482,670,000 rials.

The government is granted permission to collect the revenues and other sources of funds included in Section 3 of this law for the 1985-86 period and to make payments for the expenditures of ministries and government institutions, as well as aid and other funds which are included in the Tables in Sections 4, 5 and 6 and Appendices 1 and 2 of this law, within the limits of the collected revenues and other sources of fund procurement for the 1985-86 period, on the basis of the allocations of committed funds and in observance of the laws and regulations in the notes of this law.

B. The budget for the government companies and government affiliated profitable establishments included in Section 8 of this law, with the exception of that part of the developmental funds (fixed investment) which are provided from general

revenues, can be implemented in accordance with the laws, regulations and related bylaws.

The budget for that group of profitable establishments affiliated with the government which will become government establishments during the 1985-86 period may be implemented for the remainder of the year upon the approval of the Cabinet.

Note 1. The level of revolving funds of the treasury during the 1985-86 period is 200 billion rials.

Note 2. The Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran is granted permission, on the basis of the annual ratifications, to place the necessary funds at the disposal of the specialized concerned government organization to compensate for the shortage of the necessary cash flow to procure fertilizer, livestock fodder, powdered milk for dairy products, sugar cubes, sugar and wheat, upon the suggestion of the Ministries of Agriculture and Commerce and the approval of the Ministry of Plan and Budget, based on the need to grant the funds and the guarantees that they will be used for the procurement of the above-mentioned goods.

A. The use of the funds subject to this note will be gradual, on the basis of the chart for cash flow circulation prepared by the executive organization and approved by the Ministry of Plan and Budget, under the direct supervision and responsibility of the ministers of the concerned executive organization.

B. The implementation of the programs for purchasing the goods mentioned in this note, in accordance with the chart on cash flow circulation to be approved by the Ministry of Plan and Budget, will depend on the subsidy funding being allocated earlier by the plan and budget [committee] and deposited by the treasury in the related account at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The speaker of the plan and budget committee added: Of the amount of 40 billion rials in funds of Note 3, 10 billion rials are allocated to provinces in which the war refugees have resettled for use by the production units to be established by the war refugees in these provinces.

#### Opposing and Supporting Statements

Then the opponents and supporters of the budget bill spoke. The first opponent was Gholamhoseyn Nadi, who said: Concerning the expenditures of the ministries and organizations that have continued from before the revolution, the total current and developmental expenditures of the government was 2,000,433,000,000 rials during the period 21 March 1977-20 March 1978. During the period 21 March 1979-20 March 1980,

they decreased by 7.6 percent compared to the previous year. During the period 21 March 1980-20 March 1981, they increased by 6.4 percent. During the period 21 March 1981-20 March 1982, they increased by 1.6 percent compared to the previous year. During the period 21 March 1982-20 March 1983, they increased by 10.5 percent compared to the previous year; during the period 21 March 1983-20 March 1984, [they increased] by 24.6 percent; and during the period 21 March 1984-20 March 1985, according to the figures in the budget, they increased by 1.2 percent. On the whole, the conventional government expenditures at the current prices did not increase in the years after the victory of the revolution, until the 1981-82 period. Compared with the 1977-78 period, the 1982-83 period, which showed an increase of 10.5 percent, is equal to the 1977-78 period in the funding ceiling, and the operations for the 1984-85 period show that not only have they not increased, but have decreased.

He added: The above figures show that the budget has been spent, but the results have been insignificant.

Under the present circumstances, up to the next three years, the ceiling for the budget revenues will not be more than 3,500 billion rials. As a result, any sort of increase over this amount will impose pressure on the budget deficit, which is responsible for most of the economic problems of the country.

Continuing his statements, the speaker said: The decrease of OPEC's share in oil production has resulted in changing OPEC into a secondary factor and has caused the price of oil to decline from \$34 to \$29 per barrel. At the present time, the share of the production of OPEC countries has reached 16 million barrels per day, which is a very small figure.

#### Hasan Mahluji (Supporter)

As a supporter of the budget bill, Hasan Mahluji said: The important issue is that we see that reliance on oil revenues has decreased from 1,860 billion to 1,650 billion rials. For whatever reason, if we are unable to reach this figure of 1,860 billion rials and the world does not purchase oil from us, we must take into consideration the fact that the United States and the superpower countries consistently follow the thesis that the Middle East and the Third World, which mostly have a single base economy, must be harmed at various junctures by lowering the price of their raw materials and they must not be allowed to grow and move towards an independent economy.

Concerning the collection of taxes on trade and government employees, he said: During the 1984-85 period, the figure of government revenues from taxes was anticipated to be 870 billion rials. During the previous year, from tradespeople, 22.62

billion rials, and from people on fixed incomes, 5.6 percent in taxes were collected. During the 1984-85 year, the tradespeople paid 30 billion rials and the salaried people, again, paid 5.6 percent in taxes. Of course, the 1985-86 budget bill increases the figure for trade to 150 billion rials and the emphasis is put on the collection of taxes from the well-to-do and high-income strata of the society. Even if this is not so, we must move in that direction. Thus far, the situation has been that we have been able to collect 650 rials in taxes from businesses on the average per month, whereas the salaried people pay an average of 2,650 rials in taxes. However, in the 1985-86 budget, we increased the 30 billion rials to 150 billion rials.

The speaker added: Today, this government has outstretched its needy hand to the Majlis for approval in order to be able to carry on its developmental and essential steps throughout the country. We must help the government step by step to be able to carry out its essential tasks.

In conclusion, he added: In the 1985-86 budget law, government employment is prohibited, one way which the government has tried to reduce the current expenditures of the country. Efforts are made to leave some of the affairs to the people, including those related to housing and Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, whose developmental budget will decrease from 90-50 billion rials. In other words, we want to transfer that part of the work which the Ministry of Housing used to carry out to the people themselves.

Also, the implementation of developmental tasks in the provinces depends on the collection of taxes on businesses. The collected taxes will be used on the developmental projects of the provinces.

Furthermore, as Note 45 of the 1985-86 budget bill states, the monthly salary will increase by 8,000 rials for government employees and 5,000 rials for retired persons, which is itself one of the effective measures of the government.

In fact, this budget bill is the policy of the government in all various fields of the economy, agriculture and industry in the country, to which the Majlis must pay attention, so that, with the power of God, our budget will move us toward a healthy economy for the country.

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CSO: 4640/426

IRAN

VARIOUS MEMBERS ASSESS BUDGET BILL UNDER CONSIDERATION

Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 19 Feb 85 p 26

[Interviews with chairman and various members of Majlis plan and budget committee by KEYHAN; date and place not specified]

[Text] KEYHAN political service. This morning the budget bill for the period 21 March 1985-20 March 1986 was discussed in the Majlis. Simultaneous with the discussion of the budget bill, KEYHAN held interviews with the chairman, vice chairman, and several members of the Majlis budget committee, which follow.

The question asked of the chairman, vice chairman and members of the committee concerns their assessment of the budget law under consideration. Also, we asked these representatives about the weak and strong points of the bill. It is necessary to point out that these questions are for the purpose of achieving better bills in future years and learning about the details of this year's budget. We hope that we have been able to take steps in this direction. Below, you will read the 10th issue of KEYHAN's inquiry.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Qorban'ali Dari-Najafabadi, the chairman of the plan and budget committee of the Majlis, offered his assessment of the 1985-86 budget bill as follows:

I will try to inform you briefly on the issues concerning the 1985-86 budget. The budget, which in effect is a list of the annual revenues and expenditures of the country, ratified in an article and dozens of notes by the Majlis and announced to the government, consists mainly of the annual revenues and expenditures and the framework and methods of expenditures. One part of the budget, after the notes and single article, is the summary of the budget, which indicates in a chart the total budget and the source of the numbers and figures in the area of revenues, expenditures and general statistics and figures. I will refer briefly to the summary of the budget. In the bill

offered, the government includes 3,868.7 billion rials in expenditures, of which 259.1 billion rials were included from the funds of special revenues. The total general and special revenues were 4,127.8 billion rials. If we include the total national budget, the figure amounts to more than 6,934.5 billion rials. The budget for government companies is approximately 3,000 billion rials, which is offered to the Majlis in the form of Attachment 3 of the budget bill. Unfortunately, the budget of these companies has not been fully examined in the Majlis and the committee.

The revenues that the government included in its proposed bill consist of: 1,063.6 billion rials from taxes, 1,867 billion rials from oil, 58.3 billion rials from the sale of currency, 485.3 billion rials from other revenues, 298 billion rials in loans from domestic banks, and 98.5 billion rials in revenues returned from the previous year, making a total of 3,868.7 [billion] rials, which is equal to the expenditures. The committee thoroughly studied the revenues and the numbers and figures were realistic, to some extent. However, the committee reduced the oil revenues to 1,650 [billion rials]. Here, regarding oil, the committee fully considered the decreased reliance on oil and the problems of extraction, export and marketing, as well as global issues and the Satanic conspiracies. Considering the capacities, the resources, the situation of the existing market, the general interests of the Islamic Republic and the global situation and the power to counter it, the committee made this decision. In connection with taxes, the committee increased the amount and brought it to 1,139.5 billion rials. Of course, these taxes are distributed among various sectors, and efforts are made to avoid undue pressures on particular strata of the society. At the same time, considering the existing conditions, reliance on oil needed to be reduced and reliance on taxes and domestic revenues increased in connection with the government expenditures. Revenues from the sale of currency and other revenues, totaling 510.7 billion rials, were ratified in the committee. Again, in the areas of commercial duties, customs duties and taxes on currency and its sale, efforts are made to ratify the amount which can be collected.

As a result, the total revenues which we have been able to project on the basis of the resources, capacities and operations of this and previous years are about 3,342.2 billion rials.

In connection with business taxes, we approved the government's proposal and established ties between business taxes and the developmental and current expenditures of the provinces and the nation, which was presented to the Majlis as Note 17 in a rather complete form. We tried to prevent the increase in prices as much as possible in order to stabilize prices during the 1985-86 period and to seriously avoid any sort of sudden change in the

trend of prices and expenditures, especially those related to the public at large. On this basis, some of the revenue proposals of the government were on the whole not accepted by the committee and some others will be changed and expanded in their final form.

For instance, in regards to gasoline and oil products, the committee made an appropriate policy and made minor changes in prices. With this decision, we have come a little closer to realistic prices and also the necessary revenues were anticipated for the government. The committee eliminated items regarding foreign currency for students, school tuition, and Note 67 concerning the health department as well as fines on land.

However, in regards to expenditures, the committee approved a ceiling of 1,071.1 billion rials in developmental expenditures. We approved the current expenditures at a level of 2,567.6 billion rials and the total developmental and current expenditures at 3,638.7 billion rials. These expenditures are very reasonable, appropriate and moderate in comparison to the operations for the previous year, and to a great extent, prevent uncontrolled inflation, pressures on the banking system, the increase in the volume of cash flow and unbalanced growth of various economic sectors. In short, we are moving towards making the budget and the economic system of the country sound, God willing. If the budget operations for the previous year is, by March 1985, a maximum amount of 3,400 billion rials while the approved ceiling is 3,638.7 billion rials, we will have an increase of 248.7 billion rials compared to the operations for the period 21 March 1984-20 March 1985. While oil products this year were included in the general budget of the government at 180 billion rials, this amount has not been included in the budget approved for the 1985-86 period. The problem of loans was also reduced in the committee and amounts to 200 billion rials. The reduction of reliance on oil and on the banking system can be discussed as a strong point.

Obviously, many of the economic problems of the country under the present conditions cannot be resolved solely through budgetary solutions but require decisive and clear monetary and financial economic policies, making sound use of the banking system, guiding and giving direction to cash flow in the non-government sector, raising the production capacity in the society, efforts in regards to healthy economic activities inside the economy, the creation of increased value and the growth of the gross national product. We hope that the authorities will make use of the people in connection with economic actions, economic mobilization, the economic front and production in these areas through planning and reliance on the noble, martyr-nurturing people, who are a source of pride and who, on 11 February, six years after the victory of the revolution and despite war and

various conditions, brought that glory to Islam and the revolution.

Response of the Vice Chairman of the Plan and Budget Committee

Hojjat ol-Eslam Gholamhoseyn Nadi, the vice chairman of the plan and budget committee, said in response to us: My assessment of the 1985-86 budget and also the strong and weak points of the budget bill, in short, consists of:

1. Since the annual budgets since the revolution have been affected by the budgets before the Islamic revolution and we are heirs to them, they are like a patient who requires surgery. Of course, he has other illnesses too that must gradually be cured and, God willing, will be improved in the future.

The major budget illnesses began in 1973 or 1974. If before 1973 the annual budgets pursued a goal and anticipated a future, from that year on, the goal was lost and a movement without direction began, which resulted in various illnesses that cannot be cured in one area.

As the annual budget is usually a mirror of the conditions of the country, the budget for the 1985-86 period is no exception to this generalization. One of the weaknesses that our budgets have had and still have, and which must be cured, is that they have no goal. In other words, it is not clear in spending the amounts which are mentioned in the budget to what extent our imports will be reduced, to what extent we will come closer to self-sufficiency, or where we are in terms of improving our future. When a budget is a combination of developmental and current expenditures, investments must be made in development and its output must be clear for the future years. Unfortunately, the developmental budget often has a current nature and is used up in personnel salaries. In addition, the makeup of the budget is inappropriate, because more than 70 percent of it is allocated to current expenditures and less than 30 percent to developmental expenditures in the form which I mentioned. One of the revenue sources in the annual budgets is from government companies. In our country, there are more than 70 government companies and institutions, and billions of rials are spent in making them operational. They must now have an output and be a source of revenues. Not only do they not contribute to the budget, but they even require money annually. Whereas, in other countries, such companies are a source of most of the revenues. Obviously, we have made investments and the developmental budget has been approved, but their future is questionable.

Another weak point is that the budget deficit is not clear, because what is presented to the Majlis as the budget deficit is not clear; there are hidden deficits which pile up every year

without appearing in the budget. Essentially, since the past and present budgets have been and are based on oil, we cannot have a correct evaluation of the gross national product. In other words, if we take oil out of it, we cannot anticipate the situation. As a result, the country will always be dependent and its fate will not be determined internally by the producers, but by the world markets. If oil is sold, the affairs of the country will be managed, otherwise, they will not. Considering what was said and thousands of other problems that exist and must be analyzed in detail, I do not think any strong points remain. God willing, with improvements and the efforts of all the sincere and concerned people, some strong points will be provided.

#### Response of the Speaker of the Budget Committee

Concerning the strong and weak points of next year's budget, Seyyed Abolhasan Ha'erizadeh, the speaker of the plan and budget committee and representative of the people of Birjand to the Majlis, said:

The strong points of the 1985-86 budget are briefly as follows:

1. Determining a more essential amount for the total fixed investment funds and preventing its nonessential growth, with consideration for the implemntary capacity and capability of the country.
2. The request for relatively fewer loans by the government, which will hopefully be actualized, and it is possible for the revenues included in the bill to materialize by the end of fall of 1986.
3. More attention to agriculture, water and land, and mines and industry, with consideration for more restrictions on funds compared to last year.
4. The credit ceiling in Note 2, which determines the revolving funds for some of the organizations and government companies involved in procuring the goods essential to the country. Also, the content of the Note improved such that waste will be reduced.
5. In determining the developmental budget of the country, the committee paid attention to the priorities and the implemntary ability of the country as well as the technical and executive capabilities. The ceiling was set at a reasonable level in order to prevent dispersed work and to complete the incomplete projects, so that so many tools, machines and workers are not dispersed in various projects and better use of them can be made, as much as possible.

6. The permitted level of funds in Note 3 of the bill was modified at a more appropriate level by the committee in to be employed to make up for the shortage of capital in circulation and fixed capital for the expansion and creation of factories and industrial, agricultural, and construction materials and rural industries production centers.

7. Improvements were made in the content of Note 4 by the committee in terms of makeup and subject, which is evident in comparing the texts of the government bill and the committee proposal.

8. The amount in Note 5 was reduced by 34 billion rials, which appears to be a beneficial step.

9. The figures in Notes 6 and 7 concerning current and developmental funds were not projected by the government and were reduced appropriately. The committee took this step with consideration for the work and the manner of expenditures during the periods 21 March 1983-20 March 1984 and 21 March 1984-20 March 1985 and followed rather essential regulations in setting the expenditures.

He listed some of the weak points as follows:

1. The year to year increase in the current budget and, most importantly, the fact that in certain instances they take the form of developmental budget. In comparing the figures for similar chapters in recent years, it becomes evident that there is a substantial increase in certain chapters which are out of line with the total growth and investment in other areas.

For instance, the chapter on domestic security and the chapter on the judiciary have had a great current growth over these few years. On the other hand, the chapter on education and the chapter on higher education and research show little real growth in comparison.

2. Some figures are not clearly shown and are hidden in some notes, and the real deficiencies and deficits are not shown.

3. Many of the revenues will not materialize in this manner; they seem to be somewhat for show.

4. Considering the growth of the current budget of the provinces, some of the organizations, again, have current growth in capital as well, which is not proper. Essentially, a comparison of the periods 21 March 1979-20 March 1980 and 21 March 1980-20 March 1981 with the present budget is saddening. Given the increases in salaried personnel, one could not attend

to their problems and provide for their primary and essential needs.

5. The figure of several billion rials subject to oil products is hidden in one note concerning the general appearance of budgetary figures.

6. A number of developmental projects use some of the funds in the current expenditures every year and, essentially, in that group of developmental projects, only salaries are paid. If there were more time, one could mention numerous examples of the situation with regard to mines and so on.

7. Large figures in the budget are used in a form outside the general accounting law and have been requested in abundance in this budget. This is inviting nothing but financial disaster.

On the other hand, rather than having worked harder to establish priorities throughout the year, they have placed many notes, which should, in fact, be laws or amendments, under the single article. It is the responsibility of various Majlis committees to be the original committees in such cases. This method will not yield proper results.

#### Response of the Secretary of the Budget Committee

Engineer 'Ali 'Abdol'alizadeh, the secretary of the plan and budget committee, enumerated the strong and weak points of next year's budget as follows:

Earlier it was said that a healthy budget has several major characteristics (in the previous inquiries). Hence, in order to respond to this question, we measure the 1985-86 budget with these few characteristics and leave the final opinion to the brothers and sisters.

1. A budget must be truthful and must follow the slogans and programs stated by the government. Examining the projected revenues in the bill, we reach the following conclusions:

A. Contrary to the current slogans stating that agriculture is pivotal, even if we do not say that the bill is against agriculture, it can at least be said that it contains no programs to increase agricultural production and prevent the migration of the villagers.

B. The projected revenues are for show in numerous cases and will in practice bring no revenues to the government.

C. With the exception of oil and tax revenues (more than 70 percent of the tax revenues depend on oil), no significant

revenue source has been anticipated in the budget. In other words, the anticipated revenues are not based on increased values.

2. The budget must be in the interest of the people. The relationship between the bill offered to the Majlis and the people is only that of collecting taxes and rendering some government services. Should problems occur in collecting the anticipated revenues, the necessary mechanism is lacking to compensate for them by making use of the faith and generosity of the Hezbollah nation. This may be considered the greatest weakness of next year's budget bill.

3. The budget must be a fiscal plan. Unfortunately, the five-year plan of the country has not yet been ratified by the Majlis. Considering the present conditions, the devised budget is not a fiscal plan but merely a budget to get through the 1985-86 period.

4. Its budget deficit must be a minimum. With the studies made so far in regards to the revenues and expenditures in the bill, it is anticipated that the actual deficit is more than 25 percent of the budget.

5. The reliance of revenues on increased values, which was spoken to in connection with the first characteristics.

6. By observing the principles of the Constitution, it must reduce dependency. There are instances in the proposed bill in which, unfortunately, the principles of the Constitution have not been observed. Furthermore, it is totally dependent on oil and the role of other domestic products has become nonexistent.

7 and 8. As was referred to earlier, nothing has been anticipated to assist the people and supervise in the collection and spending of revenues.

9. All budgetary considerations are examined and devised in connection with the war and agriculture, which, unfortunately, divides the bill into two separate sections, war funds and other funds, and in regards to agriculture also, if it does not add to the existing problems, it will not solve any.

10. Trust in the implementors and decreased bureaucracy. In this case, too, no significant difference over the past is apparent.

It must be pointed out that the above-mentioned instances concern the bill proposed to the Majlis and it is hoped that with the necessary changes, the plan and budget committee of the Majlis

will be able to eliminate the existing problems and ratify a proper budget for confronting the problems of the society.

Obviously, mentioning the deficiencies of the budget does indicate a denial of the worthy services of the government in confronting the problems resulting from the imposed war, the conspiracies of the minigroups, and the domestic functionaries of the superpowers and other problems remaining from the time of the tyrant. God willing, sound criticism will result in the increased positive work potential of the government.

It is hoped that God Almighty will grant a long life to the imam, ultimate victory to the combatants of the Islamic Republic, and, to the servants of Muslims, success in obeying the directives of the imam and increasing services.

#### Response of Hojjat ol-Eslam Ghaffari, the Representative of the People of Tehran

In response to our question, Hojjat ol-Eslam Hadi Ghaffari, the representative of the people of Tehran and a member of the Majlis plan and budget committee, said:

First of all, I must say that a desireable budget is one which is part of a plan. However, unfortunately, since up to now we have been involved with various problems, we have been unable to present a plan for several years of which the budget is a part. Thank God, a five-year plan is being studied in the Majlis, and we hope that in future years, the budget will be a part of the five-year plan. However, in connection with the present budget, before everything, Islamic values must be observed. On the other hand, the conditions and characteristics of countries impose certain problems on the budget. Of course, this budget does not put pressure on the oppressed classes. In other words, such revenues as taxes are collected from those who are able to pay. You know that the budget and similar issues are not separate from our whole country. In our country, we have certain hardships in various areas, including administration. Generally, our committed people, those who defend the values of Islam and the revolution with their life, have not only not been absorbed but we see bad management in the country, which will cause despair among the religious people. For some time, we thought that our experts would be able to do something, but in practice, we saw that that group of experts who were not committed to this revolution were not able to do anything and these hardships have been created.

The budget is based on three sources of revenue, oil, taxes and other revenues. In regards to oil, we have the problem of export and sale in the world. The powerful want to break us somehow in

their global games. OPEC and the games that are played on it are primarily to bring Iran to its knees.

On the other hand, we must resolve the issue of the war with victory. One of the strong points of the budget is the increase of 8.6 billion rials to raise the salaries of employees, which will be paid in accordance with certain regulations. Efforts are made not to pay them in cash, because the payment of money will raise inflation. I personally consider any sort of injection of money into the society to be harmful. Payments must be in non-cash forms, such as housing loans. The next issue is related to exports and imports. From 1971 on, due to the injection of petro-dollars, non-petroleum exports have declined, even though since the revolution we have made progress in certain areas. And in regards to the budget, in accordance with a decree by the imam, exports have been facilitated. The weak points of the budget include the currency revenues due to non-petroleum exports. In this budget, agriculture is given special priority, in which we must actively engage. We believe that multiplicity must be resolved in the country. For instance, we have several budgets, for security, the police department, the committees, the Guards Corps, and so on, which must be resolved.

Or, in regards to agriculture, which must be operated by a specific organization and must be dealt with in an aggressive and revolutionary manner. Our agricultural problems cannot be solved with 16-story buildings. Of course, by revolutionary I do not mean being without a program, of which our enemies accuse us. Revolutionary means that there is little waste and ceremony. In regards to industries and purchasing from abroad, there must be congruity; not every ministry should purchase separately. A committee must be formed to control foreign purchases and sales.

#### Response of a Member of the Plan and Budget Committee

Mohammad 'Ali Sobhanollahi, a member of the plan and budget committee and the representative of the people of Tabriz to the Majlis, said in response to our question: After much study of the proposed government budget bill by the committee, certain changes were made. God willing, with the proper implementation of this bill, considering the existing resources and situation, positive steps can be taken.

In connection with the revenues, efforts are made to rely on actual revenues and those revenues that would not impose pressure on the oppressed and middle classes. The omission of the note concerning school tuitions and Note 67 concerning treatment are examples of the steps taken by the committee.

In regards to expenditures, certain conditions are included in notes, the observance of which, God willing, will enable the

brothers in the executive branch to better prevent waste in the treasury while resolving their implementary problems.

Of course, in my opinion, some of these conditions must be removed, for example, some of the conditions that have been included in Note 20 of the committee report. Along with these steps, a series of expenditures in the bill which were either unnecessary or able to be carried out by the non-government sector were omitted. Considering these cuts and the deficit modifications, the budget reached a figure lower than that proposed by the government, which, God willing, will be a step towards reducing the growth of inflation.

#### Response of the Representative of Hamadan

'Ali Aqa Mohammadi, a member of the plan and budget committee and the representative of the people of Hamadan to the Majlis, said in response to our question: This year's budget, since it was offered to the Majlis along with the currency budget and export and import regulations, has positive points, because coordinating these issues in connection with balancing the economic wheel of the society will be very effective.

For example, we might include the rial budget for an organization without looking at the currency resources of the country and later not be able to allocate currency to it. Naturally, what will happen is that it will block a certain amount of money and other capabilities, including currency, will not be able to be responded to, whereas we might be able to give loans rather than such a permit or not grant permission for the start of another developmental project that relies on domestic resources. This, in fact, can be harmful. Or, when we inject money into the society, if we do not take into consideration the kind of goods, their prices and the money which is in the hands of the people together, many problems in connection with money in circulation will result.

If we are able to give good direction to the currency budget, naturally, we will be acting more appropriately. The next point concerns the budget revenues. The figures for revenues in the budget were made realistic by the plan and budget committee.

The next point concerns other revenues, which a number of people will make an income from if attention is not paid to them and they are not collected. These are revenues gained from currency. Considering that currency revenues take capital out of the country, improper exports or large subsidies for items having a foreign source results in the import of foreign goods at low prices into the market. In addition, considering the increase in wages and the level of expenditures in the country, domestic products would become expensive. In fact, incentives would turn

from production of domestic items towards consumption of is what has a foreign base. In this connection, 158 billion rials have been projected in revenues from this source.

Therefore, the revenues were made realistic, as much as possible. But expenditures were also corrected to some extent by the committee. In connection with developmental expenditures, positive steps were taken. That is, funds were allocated to the national projects that in the course of the first two years, that is, during the period 21 March 1985-20 March 1987, will be completed and the long-term projects were set aside until a plan is offered by the plan and budget organization. After discussions, studies and the opinion of the plan and budget organization, a budget will be allocated to them.

The next point is the particular attention paid to government employees. It was decided to pay married employees up to 8,000 rials per month in marital benefits. I said it is important because the total figure to help the government employees and the armed forces reaches 60 billion rials. This amount equals what we pay to Tavanir for electricity production. However, there are problems in the budget. One is that, essentially, a budget must be based on a plan; 1 year must be part of a 5-year plan and a 5-year plan must also be part of a 20-year plan. Since our five-year plan has not been ratified, naturally, this criticism can be made of the budget.

Another problem is that our organizations do not offer services as they should in exchange for the money that they receive. This is important, because the people's money is put at the disposal of an organization that offers them services. Naturally, it is also important to see whether or not the prices of those services are feasible. Another problem is that since budget deductions have not taken place and some of the audits of the ministries are behind, the ministries that have not closed their accounts must be dealt with somehow next year, because if the accounts are not closed, they cannot be passed. The next point concerns the companies which are in fact included in the budget bill in a way that the budget of the companies has not been examined even though the budget of the companies is nearly as much as the general budget of the government. The companies themselves are behind in their audits and the balances of some of them have not been approved by their boards. Another problem is that in regards to actual costs, there is a lack of clarity. For example, in regards to iron, we give some assistance to the national steel company. On the other hand, we help the coal mines and then we announce the cost minus these, whereas we have put a large amount of capital into the steel mill and provide them with electricity, fuel and energy at a low cost. Naturally, if these expenditures were included in the price, then the price of domestic iron would be determined.

If this price could be announced, naturally, lumber would grow and we would no longer have the problem of not being able to make use of our forests, and our lumber industry would not suffer stagnation. This lack of balance in prices in fact makes the society go in directions that are not in the public interest.

The next point involves items to which the general accounting law does not apply. Although last year the Council of Guardians objected and we took Note 54 into consideration, the accounting court announces that it cannot investigate because there is no clear framework in the law and it must be accepted merely with a signature.

The next point is in connection with the spirit governing the future of domestic agriculture and production. In this connection, under the heading of a price freeze, we block the increase of the price of agricultural products in such a way that the incentive for production is taken away from the farmers. For the industries, we now use the domestic cost as a base for prices, but in regards to agricultural products, exactly the opposite takes place. In other words, the basis for calculation is the foreign price. That is, we import wheat, cotton, and so on, and then, in the course of long years, we freeze the domestic price, whereas the price of agricultural products must be calculated on the basis of audits, cost estimates and balanced profits, taking any priorities into consideration, then have this price as the base. But now, we are acting on the contrary. We are so drowned in it that, unfortunately, we import \$2.5 billion of the major products we need, a small amount of which goes for fertilizers and the remainder for agricultural products which enter the market in competition with domestic products.

The last point concerns developmental projects. In this connection, there are two problems, one is that the implementary capability of the country is not considered and the second is a lack of implementary methods taking into consideration the resources within the country. In fact, the implementary potential is not fully realized and the existing capacities are not fully utilized. The result is that in order to implement some of the developmental projects, we go to foreigners. If such items are highly specializec, there is no problem, but if they are contractual work, they will cause problems, which we must avoid. Therefore, plans must be made such that all the existing resources in the country are used in the implementation of developmental projects.

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CSO: 4640/426

IRAN

WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX FOR NOV-DEC 84 INCREASED 1.7 PERCENT

Tehran BURS in Persian 21 Jan 85 p 5

[Text] The wholesale price index of goods in Iran was 384.4 in Nov-Dec 1984, a 1.7 percent increase from the previous month. This is a 7.3 percent increase from the same period last year. After seasonal adjustment, the wholesale price index increased 1.3 percent from October 1984. During the first nine months of this year the wholesale price index for goods in Iran had an average increase of 7.5 percent compared to the same period last year.

The increase of the wholesale price index for goods this month was due to the increase of fruits and vegetables (except citrus fruit) because of the season; the price increase of some dairy products, cattle and bird feed, cotton seed, ginned cotton, some paper products, iron and metal wire was neutralized by the price decrease of wheat, wheat flour, all kinds of rice, bricks, silk and cotton cloth, rugs and lumber.

1. Produced and Consumed Goods in the Country

During the reported month, the price index of produced and consumed goods in the nation was 231.1 which increased 2 percent compared to last month. The increase of the price index of produced and consumed goods in the nation is totally due to the increased price of fruits and vegetables (except citrus fruit) because of the season. In this group, the price of some dairy products, cattle and bird feed, cotton seed and ginned cotton also increased. Due to the decrease of the price of wheat, wheat flour, rice, brick, silk and cotton cloth, and lumber this price increase was neutralized. After seasonal adjustments, the mentioned price index decreased 0.1 percent compared to last month. The price index of produced and consumed goods in the nation increased 8.3 percent compared to the same month last year.

2. Imported Goods

The price index of imported good in Nov-Dec 1984 increased 0.4 percent. The slight increase of the price index of imported goods this month resulted from the price increase of iron wire, printing and photocopy paper, cement bags, watches, manometers, and bicycles.

After seasonal adjustments, the price index of this group increased 0.5 percent compared to last month. The price index of imported goods increased 0.3 percent compared to the same month last year.

### 3. Exported Goods

The price index of exported goods increased 1.6 percent this month due to the price increase of some dried fruits. After seasonal adjustment, this price index increased 1.4 percent compared to last month. The price index of exported goods increased 6.6 percent compared to the same month last year.

#### Foodstuff and Live Stock

The price index of fruits and vegetables increased 10.5 percent (except for citrus fruits which declined 13.4 percent). The greatest price index increase this month, 3.2 percent, belongs to foodstuff and live stock. In this group, grain prices increased 0.3 percent, dairy products and eggs 0.7 percent, meat, chicken, fish and related products 0.1 percent, spices, tea, coffee, and cocoa 1.1 percent and livestock 1.4 percent. But grain and related products' prices declined 0.7 percent and animal and vegetable oils prices decreased 0.3 percent.

The price index of this group after seasonal adjustment shows a 0.7 percent decrease compared to last month.

The price index of foodstuff and livestock shows a 0.6 percent increase compared to last month and a decrease compared to the same month last year.

#### Textiles and Clothing

The price increase of wood and cotton was 5.8 percent, different kinds of thread 0.2 percent, and clothes 0.7 percent resulting in a price index increase for textile and cloth of 0.3 percent. In this group, the price of cotton and silk fabrics increased 1.6 percent and rugs 0.5 percent.

The price index of textiles and clothing after seasonal adjustments, increased 0.4 percent compared to last month and increased 0.8 percent compared to the same month last year.

Agricultural and livestock products in this month increased 0.4 percent, resulting from the price index increase of a group of agricultural products equal to 4.50 percent and livestock and fish products of 1.3 percent.

After seasonal adjustments, the price index of this group decreased 0.9 percent compared to last month. The price index of agriculture and livestock products increased 0.15 percent compared to the same month last year.

#### Construction Materials

In the reported month the price index of the construction materials group

decreased 0.1 percent as a result of a 0.7 percent decrease of non-metal construction materials. In this group the prices of metal construction materials increased 0.6 percent. The index of construction materials after seasonal adjustments increased 0.4 percent compared to last month. This index increased 6.6 percent compared to the same month last year.

9815

CSO: 4640/365

IRAN

CREATION OF INDUSTRY NOT REQUIRING FOREIGN EXCHANGE ENCOURAGED

Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 3 Feb 85 p 3

[Text] Shiraz--KEYHAN reporter--On his recent trip to Shiraz, Engineer Shafei, the minister of industry, participated in a gathering of the directors of industries, responsible authorities of production units of Fars Province, and the governor-general of Fars.

In this gathering, a few of the directors of industries first talked about the problems of foreign exchange, personnel, raw materials, spare parts, and for more cooperation between universities and industries. Then Engineer Shafei, the minister of industry, addressed them and said: "The people have expectations from us to make efforts to cut dependency. They ask what the educated masses and university people have done in the direction of cutting dependency and what steps they will take. The previous government did not pursue these matters. All their worries were to sell oil and import factories and consumer goods. We do not deny convenience but things made by the hands of Japanese and British cannot be called convenient for our nation. The eggs, chickens, wheat, cigarettes, etc. that we consume are all "dependent" and you and I are responsible more than anyone else. Therefore we must evaluate industries and establish those which save the nation's economy from dependency. Come and present solutions. Do the industrial countries have oil or do they live off oil income? The consuming nations also will not need oil forever. Oil will lose its place in another 20 years. Therefore now is the time to think about industries which are profitable for our future. We must make plans and through the export of non-oil goods decrease our foreign exchange needs." He added: "The countries bordering the Persian Gulf import their water from France, why don't we bottle water and import foreign exchange? Make efforts to use industrial loans and not bank loans. An 800 billion tuman industry loan is not a small amount of money. By borrowing enormous amounts of money from the banks, the pre-revolution managers endangered the economy's health and also had a bad fate. They created problems for the banks and damaged the economic system of the nation."

The minister of industry in the continuation of his trip to the provinces of Kohkiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad and Fars participated in a press conference and said: "With attention to the 4 million cattle in Kohkiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad provinces I think the establishment of an agriculture school is necessary in this region and the proper authorities of Shiraz university have agreed." He added: "Those industries in Kohkiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad which are connected with forests, mines, handicraft products and providing cattle feed from chestnuts to nyupan will be given permits to export these products."

He added: "In our visit to the Dena Bridgestone tire factory it was noted that a 10,000 ton project is almost complete. God willing, tire production will be increased to 30,000 tons in the coming year. Also the Shiraz vegetable oil factory and the petrochemical and chemical industries of Quds have plans for the production of chemical solutions and formalin." He mentioned that the establishment of two cement factories each with a 2000 ton capacity and three factories with a capacity of 500 tons in Fars are being approved. "Those individuals who would like to create the needed industries in the country which do not require government foreign exchange can proceed." The minister of industry added: "Certainly individuals and Iranians residing abroad are involved in business and have had the means of producing foreign exchange and those with foreign exchange accounts in the bordering countries of the Persian Gulf region can take part in creating industries and meet the needs of the nation."

The minister of industry at the conclusion said: "The ministry of industry will support producers in exporting their goods and we hope that the obtained foreign exchange will be used in the industrial sector. The supreme export council also has regulations in this regard. In the current year the government has allocated 2 billion dollars of foreign exchange for industry and this amount is in addition to the foreign exchange for goods and funds obtainable from the non-official foreign exchange market."

9815

CSO: 4640/377

IRAN

MINISTER OF MINES DESCRIBES GOVERNMENT, PRIVATE INVESTMENTS

Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 3 Feb 85 p 3

[Text] Yazd--KEYHAN reporter--Engineer Nili, the minister of mines and metals in a special interview with KEYHAN spoke about his trip to Yazd Province, the projects of the ministry of mines and metals under implementation, the transfer of mines to the private sector and investment in mines.

First he said: "The purpose of my trip to Yazd Province is to study possibilities, the progress of the studied projects, acquire information about the activities performed by the units under the auspices of the ministry of mines and metals and also to become acquainted with the conditions and circumstances of mines in the province."

The minister of mines and metals in regard to the division of mines in respect to the priorities of the country and related to existing technology said: "The ministry of mines and metals is the custodian of all the nation's mine affairs and regulations. In fact the administration of the nation's mines has been entrusted to the ministry of mines and metals." Engineer Nili added: "In fact our mines are divided into three groups: mines for producing construction materials, metal mines and non-metal mines. Mines for producing construction materials are called group one mines in the mine laws. Their priority is discovery, extraction, and full production in order to meet public needs until the shortage of construction material is does not exist in the country. In regard to construction materials, we must state that we prepare them up to the stage of melting and convert them to the finished product to be offered to the nation's industry." He added: "The non-metal mines must be identified, extracted and prepared in order to be consumed and to be used in the chemical, food, agriculture, drug, ceramic, etc. industries in the country." Engineer Nili indicated: "We are not able to specify which mines have priority since each one is important and must be paid attention to."

In regard to the use of the minerals near mine boundaries he said: "At present we have taken steps to identify the possibilities and industries that can be established near mines. We must maintain close relations

with the ministry of industry in order to identify the needs or the nation's industries and the potential advantages of the nation's mines through discovery, extraction and production and how they can meet each others needs. In any case, in planning and execution of the projects, continued cooperation with the ministry of industry exists."

The minister of mines and metals in regard to the extraction of mines in Yazd Province said: "The mine laws clearly indicate the rules and operation of the mines. Also in order to facilitate production of the nation's mines and activate this sector in the economy it is essential to create a series of facilities." He continued: "We have prepared a suggestion in the form of an amendment. In this amendment problems in regard to the mines, discovery work and extraction have been anticipated. Thank God the generalities of this amendment have been approved by the Islamic Majlis and if this amendment is ratified I think all the economic sectors of the country, whether government, cooperative or private, will be able to proceed with operations and extract mines without any difficulties."

About investment in the mining sector he said: "In my opinion we must work towards and only pay attention to those industries in our long term projects whose resources and raw materials will be provided from within the country." He added: "The way to create a healthy and non-dependent economy is to pay attention to those industries which have mineral roots from within, meaning that their raw materials exist within the country and can be exported."

The minister of mines and metals in conclusion of his talk indicated: "We can see the root of the nation's industry in the mines. Therefore, I think that after agriculture, priority in national planning should be given to mining. Thank God the government has already noticed this fact and in its circular of the 1985-1986 budget, attention has been paid to these circumstances and priority has been given to mines after agriculture, soil, and water."

9815  
CSO: 4640/377

IRAN

EMIGRE PAPER: ECONOMY IS AT IMPASSE, CLOSE TO EXPLOSION

London KEYHAN in Persian 28 Feb 85 p 1

[London KEYHAN weekly in Persian, founder and publisher Dr Mesbahzadeh]

[Text] Iran's economic crisis is rapidly facing very dangerous dimensions. The proposed budget of the coming year, even if it relies on real figures (which it definitely does not), shows a dark horizon for our sick and damaged economy.

During the past 6 years, the Ayatollah's regime kept the economy floating through three successful factors. The first factor was the vast reserve of public and private wealth inherited from the past. Even Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani, the speaker of the Majlis who is far from being fair, has accepted that in this country a sea of wealth exists. During these 6 years, the government and the majority of people spent their savings and now their savings are consumed. The second factor which helped keep the nation's economy from sinking was the rapid increases of the price of oil and the dollar. Even today, the minimum purchasing power of Iran's oil income is 70 percent more than during the Shah's era. The third factor is the decline of the people's standard of living. Our nation during these 6 years (except for a small minority of plunderers) has become progressively poorer. Taqi Banki, the Islamic minister of planning and budget, estimated that the standard of living of the masses of people declined between 20 to 25 percent. In other words, the majority of Iranians, thanks to the Ayatollah's revolution, are one quarter poorer today than the day the Shah left the country. Our people have lost 6 years of economic improvement and growth and instead they have suffered war, killing and desolation.

Anyhow we have attained a position where we cannot rely on any of the above three factors. Individual and social savings and wealth accumulated during nearly 15 years of economic growth have been more or less used. The closing of important parts of our industries along with the agricultural crisis has prevented the generation of new actual wealth. From the other side, the price of oil has started to decline and it is not certain when it will stop descending. The West has not forgotten that a noticeable part of its wealth is indebted to one dollar a barrel oil. To wish to return to the time of one dollar a barrel oil is an impossible dream, but certainly the West with its new strategy will use its maximum effort to decrease the price of oil for its own behalf. Besides the Iran-Iraq war (which by another name is Iran's war with all the

Arab nations) has changed OPEC to a paper tiger. Khomeyni's government, deprived from the two first factors, has focused its attention on the third factor, that is reducing people's standard of living. The Ayatollah talks about the advantage of contentment and recommends that people sit on the floor, eat less, and be content with one dress. The slogan that poverty is gloriousness is used like a mace to hit the heads of the comfort seekers. Seeking comfort, which is the natural right of every human being, is now an unforgiveable sin. The majority of Iranians now tolerate enormous frustration. Therefore there is not much fat profit left for Mir Hoseyn to trim. The knife which he holds over his budget will very soon drive the people to desperation. He has at least a 15 billion dollar budget deficit and he does not want nor is even able to collect it by direct taxation. Most of the nation's industrial organizations have either suffered losses, are on the verge of bankruptcy, or have been confiscated by the government. Therefore, the industrial organization is not able to pay what it does not have to the government. To collect taxes from the agricultural sector in Iran is like trying to put a horseshoe on a flying mosquito. Finally the government employees and other salaried individuals, who are under more pressure than anybody else are obliged to suffer more deprivation. Mir Hoseyn Khamene'i has embarked on three other ways too. First is the gradual termination of indirect government aid for stabilizing of the price of necessary goods. Second the termination of free education and medical care. Third is the increase of indirect taxes.

In other words the new Khamene'i budget is planned precisely against the oppressed. We must distinguish the few 100,000 Hezbollahi mercenaries paid by the government to protect the Ayatollah's regime and separate these professionally oppressed from the real oppressed of the society. The Ayatollah has brought the nation of Iran, like the Iranian economy, to an impasse, an impasse that if in the end we are not able to save ourselves through wisdom, and intelligence, nothing will be left except explosion and disaster. This black final termination will not bring happiness to anyone, not even to the opposition of the republic of oppression and lies. We as a nation must set aside our differences of opinion and party and study the accounts of six years of the Ayatollah's inhumane government. The economic crises caused by imprudence, ill intentions and sabotage of the Ayatollah's government officials for the past 6 years has created difficulties for reconstructing the future Iran and providing humane facilities for the deprived and hardworking masses more complicated.

9815

CSO: 4640/418

IRAN

REFINERY PRODUCTION PROVIDES \$25 MILLION IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE

Tehran SOBH-E AZADEGAN in Persian 21 Jan 85 p 2

[Text] According to the CENTRAL NEWS UNIT, with the continued efforts of the faithful and committed workers and employees of Tabriz refinery, in addition to providing 17 percent of the fuel and energy products of our country and increasing production by more than 34 percent over the designed capacity, by changing the fuel quality of the refinery to valuable products such as kerosene and diesel fuel and changing sulfuric gasoline to high quality gasoline, an annual amount of \$25 million is saved in foreign currency and 2 billion rials is deposited in the national treasury. In an interview with the reporter for the CENTRAL NEWS UNIT, the director of Tabriz refinery announced the above statement and, referring to the constant efforts of the workers in this refinery, he said: After the first operational phase of this refinery began, in the course of 21 months, an increase of 21 percent in refining output was created by the changes made in the refining equipment. In the second phase, the refining increase of up to 45 percent has been projected, planned, and implemented, and at present, the Tabriz refinery continues its work with an increase of more than 34 percent above its designed capacity. Continuing this interview, the director of the Tabriz refinery referred to the popular policy of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning its support for the oppressed and remote villagers of our country and said: In order to follow this course and participate in this task, which is pleasing to God, the Tabriz refinery produces a daily amount of 6,000 barrels of tar needed for the road building projects of the Reconstruction Crusade and other concerned institutions in order to expedite communications between villages and cities. This figure can be increased to 8,000 barrels per day in the construction season.

In regards to the production of liquid gas, he said: According to a projected plan, the Tabriz refinery was to be able to produce more than 150 tons of liquid gas daily; however, at present, it produces 300 tons daily, an increase of 50 percent compared to other years.

In the conclusion of this interview, the director of Tabriz refinery added: After the victory of the magnificent Islamic revolution of Iran, in order to achieve self-sufficiency and independence from the East and the West in all areas, the hard-working employees and experts of the refinery were able to repair, install and put into operation all the parts, equipment and machines of the refinery which had worn out or were otherwise not working without seeking help from foreign experts.

10,000  
CSO: 4640/371

IRAN

CARE URGED IN FREEING PRISONERS THAT THREATEN ISLAM

Tehran SOBH-E AZADEGAN in Persian 23 Jan 85 p 2

[Text] The heads of the branches of the high revolution court along with Mr Bojnordi, a member of the Supreme Judicial Council, met with Grand Ayatollah Montazeri. In this meeting, first Mr Bojnordi presented a report to Grand Ayatollah Montazeri on the establishment of the high revolution court, which was formed at the suggestion of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, the quality of the work and the careful attention of the officials of the branches of the high revolution court to the rulings of the primary courts.

He thanked the scholars who spent a great deal of time in this court to ensure that the injunctions would be carried out most carefully without being influenced by any particular climate or circumstances existing during the interrogations in the primary courts.

Under these circumstances, when the Supreme Judicial Council has frequently announced that it needs the cooperation of committed and distinguished scholars, has officially invited them, and, furthermore, the judicial organization cannot be closed down, [as published]

The responsibility of scholars who are experts in political and judicial issues is very heavy, because if as a result of the lack of participation of such individuals in the judicial affairs of the country, God forbid, violations or mistakes should occur somewhere, all those who were able to cooperate with the judicial branch in the courts but did not do so will be responsible before God. Concerning the Islamic view in dealing with the guilty and sinners, he emphasized:

The individuals who are tried in the revolution and other courts, even though they might have committed a great crime or sin, must not be treated with vengeance. These individuals are in fact sick people who must be dealt with in the prisons and courts in terms of treatment and preparing them psychologically to return

to the society and their families, especially the young girls and boys who have been used politically and criminally and have been deceived and trapped by the Satans, due to their being very emotional and unaware of the issues and currents.

In this case, too, the basis of our work and actions must be psychological reform, or at least to make sure that they will not return to their past false and corrupt ways. If we become assured that such individuals will no longer be deceived by the minigroups and commit crimes, we must not keep them in prison, which would be propaganda food for the enemies of Islam and the revolution, even if they do not believe in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to the leader of our revolution, what is important is that the released individuals not harm Islam, the revolution, or the society, regardless of whether or not they believe in our Islamic regime.

Then, referring to the special attention of the leader of the revolution to releasing individuals whose freedom would not harm Islam or the revolution, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri emphasized: Although a group of committed scholars have been appointed by the imam to investigate this important issue and thus far they have accomplished a great deal, with the efforts and cooperation of the Supreme Judicial Council, it is appropriate that the prosecutor and judges of the capital and provincial cities cooperate more with the imam's pardon committee and the Supreme Judicial Council regarding this important issue, which is of interest to the leader of the revolution. They should not wait for the arrival of the committee from Tehran, but begin the judicial investigation of the prisoners and send lists of those that they conclude do not need to remain in prison to the Supreme Judicial Council or the imam's pardon committee in order for their pardons to be processed more rapidly so that they can be released.

Then, comparing the present conditions of the Islamic Republic of Iran with those of the conquest of Mecca by the great Prophet of Islam and the establishment of the Islamic government on the Arabian Peninsula, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri pointed out: Although at the time of the establishment of the Islamic government in Medina, while facing the disruptive actions of the corrupt Jewish members of Bani Qoreyzeh and other enemies of Islam, the Prophet of Islam took extreme measures and executed the corrupt and corrupting individuals, after the establishment of the Islamic government and the conquest of Mecca, when there was no longer a threat of harm to Islam or the Islamic government from these individuals, we see that the Prophet of Islam, showing mercy, issued a general pardon for many individuals, such as Abu Sofyan and even the murderer of his uncle, because he did not

feel threatened by their release. In conclusion, he pointed out: In my opinion, today as well, now that the Islamic Republic has been established, the deviant and corrupt minigroups have no base or credit among the people and no harm to the regime or the revolution will come from them, our political circumstances are relatively similar to those of the time of the Prophet of Islam and the conquest of Mecca.

Also, on Sunday, the Friday imam of Rudan, accompanied by a number of the clerics and Friday imams of Hormozgan as well as the directors general and a number of the families of the martyrs of this province, met and spoke with Grand Ayatollah Montazeri.

In this meeting, after discussing the issues concerning the province and the services rendered by the governor general and other officials, they asked for responses to the requests of the governor general, the resolution of his problems, and his return to the region. Then, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri expressed his gratitude for the sense of responsibility in the gentlemen, stressed the preservation of the unity of the word, and expressed hope that the concerned officials will respond as quickly as possible to the requests of the Friday imams and the governor general. He emphasized: It is appropriate that inspectors be sent by the Supreme Judicial Council to the province so that if there are violations, they will be followed up and prompt, decisive steps will be taken. According to this report, on Sunday, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri was presented with the amount of 1 million rials from the people of Astara through the Friday imam of that city and the amount of \$10 million from charitable individuals of the city of Qom in aid to the fronts of the imposed war.

10,000  
CSO: 4640/371

IRAN

FADZLALLAH GIVES VIEWS ON LEBANESE RESISTANCE, CIVIL WAR

Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 3 Mar 85 p 5

[Interview with Allamah Seyyed Muhammad Fazlollah]

[Text]

Following is the text of the interview:

**Q:** With regard to the growth of the Islamic movements in Lebanon, has the time come to raise the slogan of an Islamic government in Lebanon?

**A:** It is still too early for the slogan of an Islamic government to be projected in Lebanon. Because the nature of the composition of the Lebanese nation prevents its realization at the present time. Lebanon consists of 17 different tribes each with special interests and circles. Colonialism inspired this tribal personality in each tribe and thus it became very difficult for a new thought to find and open field among all the tribes. Therefore, we believe that the phase that all Muslims should pass now is the elimination of the tribal political manner so that the people will be able to think with open minds.

**Q:** Mr. Fazlollah, considering the point that you are from the connoisseurs of Lebanon, what are your expectations from the Islamic activities in Lebanon?

**A:** I believe that political activity in Lebanon could provide a wider ground for the Islamic movement. And this Islamic movement has been acknowledged and honored by all local, regional, and international forces, by both those who label it as terrorism and those who have friendly feelings towards it. But we believe that it is hard for the U.S. and its mercenaries to harm the Islamic movement in Lebanon, for it is a powerful current and is not confined to a definite region.

It is natural that Israel schemes to instigate religious and sectarian fighting between Muslims and Christians in south Lebanon and also among the Palestinian

and Lebanese Muslims. By this action Israel attempts to convince the public opinion that the Lebanese nation cannot safeguard its own security and international or Israeli forces should certainly be present in Lebanon.

**Q:** How do you evaluate the stance of the Islamic Conference Organization before the events of Lebanon?

**A:** In fact, we do not have any hope in such conferences that name themselves Islamic or Arab summits. Because, in our opinion, most of these countries move in line with the United States. These countries revolve around the political axis of Egypt, Jordan and Iraq. They act on the basis of non-resistance before Israel and its presence in Lebanon. Therefore, they fear the perspective for this Islamic movement adopted in the Islamic conference will not be executed, for they

**offer no help to the Lebanese nation, let alone the combatant believers and Mujahideen.**

**Q:** How is the relation between the Islamic Towhid Movement in Tripoli and the Islamic Movement in the South?

**A:** Of course, there are many relations between the Towhid Movement and the Islamic Movement in the south. Cooperation and consultation exist between us and Brother Sae'd Sha'ban, the leader of the Islamic Towhid Movement. We have sometimes thought about the formation of a United Islamic Front between these two movements.

**Q:** What results has the security plan of the Lebanese government brought about and who is the winner in the middle?

**A:** In fact, the security plans that were projected diminished the fire of war in Beirut to some extent. This is not regarded as a victory for the government, for all the

parties involved reached an agreement. Of course, some factors such as the Syrians' pressure and the present conditions of the region have increased the possibility of success of this plan.

**Q:** The global imperialism raised the propaganda that you support suicide raids on foreigners in Lebanon. What is your answer vis-a-vis this issue?

**A:** This is an honor we do not claim and an accusation that we do not reject. We make our best efforts and cooperate with all Mujahideen to pursue the global imperialism and its lackeys in the region. We don't claim to be a big power. But with this existing force and with these efforts of ours, we are duty-bound to liberate the Muslims and the region from the domination of the U.S., Russia, and all their mercenaries and puppets, and priority is given to the U.S., because it is the U.S. that

supports Israel and the puppet regimes.

**Q:** What are the main problems before the Islamic Movement in Lebanon and what obstacles do you see in your way?

**A:** Of course, the problems of the Islamic movement have external dimensions but as regards the internal problems the major one is the tribal problem. For example, the Christians take a hostile stance against the Islamic movement in the south on the basis of their tribal preoccupation. The Islamic Movement needs time to mature its manner of thinking and political activity. But we believe that it is moving on the right path.

**Q:** Do Palestinians have any presence in Lebanon now? If yes, what role do they perform?

**A:** The Palestinians live in the camps in the Syrian controlled regions. But they are not present on the scene of battle.

CSO: 4600/346

IRAN

ON REGIME'S UNATTAINABLE GOAL IN UNWINNABLE WAR

Athens I KATHIMERINI in Greek 24-25 Mar 85 p 3

[Article by Andreas Khatzinkolaou; "Basrah: Unattainable Target in Iran's Strategic Plans"]

[Excerpts] Amarah (Iraq)--It would not be an exaggeration to maintain that the 54th month of this hard and bloody war has rather determined its outcome and may have established a timetable for its development. The reasons on which I base my evaluation could be summarized thus: the large spring offensive that the Iranian forces were preparing since last winter has completely failed. The events occurred in the first 5 days of the current month and in two areas. In Athir--390 kms south of Baghdad--and in Basrah--the second-largest city in Iraq. The forces of Ayatollah Khomeyni had a basic objective: to cross the Tigris River and to establish a base on the West Bank. A successful attack would have given them the possibility to establish full control over the only major artery uniting Baghdad to the southern part of the country.

At the same time, they would have had the opportunity to encircle Amarah and Basrah, to prevent any reinforcements from reaching them and to attempt at the right moment to invade these heavily-populated areas. Their military gain would have constituted the occupation of half Iraq. However, the situation turned out differently.

The advance of the Iranian forces on these two fronts was cut off last Sunday, and indeed in a way that must have exceeded the expectations of the Iraqi general staff.

What Iraq Gained

In the Athir area--a few kilometers outside Amarah--the Iranians were repulsed to a depth of 15 kms by a concerted attack of the Iraqi air force, artillery and infantry. There were approximately 2,000 Iranian casualties, 480 soldiers and officers were captured, 27 U.S.-manufactured tanks were destroyed, 9 others were seized, as were tens of tons of ammunition, especially individual arms. Let me interpose a parenthesis, as a simple commentary. In a swampy area of the Athis region, six wooden crates of ammunition of a simple portable type were found; they were of Greek origin, bearing the marks of the PYR-KAL [Power and Cartridge Company]. An Iraqi major, smiling discreetly but ironically, picked up some of the ammunition and told me that it would soon reach the office of the Iraqi minister of foreign affairs. It is believed that Iran purchased the ammunition from Syria, which had bought it from the PYR-KAL.

The Iranian forces suffered about the same fate in Basrah. They were also repulsed to a depth of about 10 kms; but their retreat was well organized and losses were smaller. The air force was surely a basic element of the Iraqi victory, succeeding in downing four Iranian Phantom aircraft in 48 hours.

#### What Iran Lost

It is my personal impression that Iran had put all its expectations for the success of its initiative in last week's attack. But its failure is obvious. More than anything else, it denotes a weakness in its military equipment. We were astonished to find out that the largest part of the Iranians' equipment that was destroyed only satisfied the requirements of a military era of the past. With the exception of portable equipment, (we also noted Soviet Kalashnikovs that may have reached Iran through Israel--which captured them in Beirut from Palestinian reserves), military transports were Toyotas of ancient design, anti-aircraft equipment was of the hand-operated type and there were additions of a different, older type on tanks.

Thus, in addition to failing in their original purpose, the Iranian forces lost some of their positions. How can Iran, therefore, hope in a grand new offensive, especially against Basrah, when it fought for 53 months even to reach the positions it held until last week and lost about 400,000 men? And how can it prepare its military apparatus for a new counter-attack when it is devoid of battle-worthy possibilities because of its lack of spare parts?

France, the Soviet Union, China, Brazil and the United States through Egypt, as well as Saudi Arabia and Jordan are reinforcing Iraq with light and heavy military equipment, while Iran is purchasing weapons from different sources and its men are ignorant in their handling of them, since their military machinery had been operating for decades according to U.S. technology. If one adds to this the information that for the first time on 15, 16 and 17 March, there were anti-Khomeyni demonstrations in the southern region of Iran, it would not be too difficult to set a timetable for the Iran-Iraq confrontation.

However, regardless of this last evaluation of the conflict, I repeat the common view of the news team operating these days on the battle front: "The Basrah affair has probably ended for the Iranians."

CSO: 3521/223

IRAN

MUSAVI-ARDABILI EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT UNIVERSITY PROBLEMS

Tehran SOBH-E AZADEGAN in Persian 21 Jan 85 p 19

[Text] In a meeting with a group of university presidents, Ayatollah Musavi-Ardabili, the chief justice and a member of the supreme council of the cultural revolution, said: Building houses for professors and the creation of organizational houses is one way to solve the problem of housing for university faculty and to attract committed professors.

In this meeting, which took place last Saturday afternoon, the university presidents presented a report to the chief justice on the cultural and scientific condition of the universities, the existing obstacles to administration, and the problems regarding living conditions for professors and students.

Then, Ayatollah Musavi-Ardabili offered the necessary instructions concerning the issues raised and said: Our regime is quite different from the previous one in terms of values and goals. However, our executive organizations are the same as before, and these organizations were formed to implement previous duties. He added: I believe that today a fundamental change in terms of personnel, laws and regulations governing the office and in terms of organization as well must take place in order to eliminate the existing problems. He added: Part of your problems concerns the supreme council of the cultural revolution. On the other hand, some of the other problems mentioned are not exclusive to the universities, but are shared by all the organizations of the country.

The chief justice added: You must establish priorities for your problems and difficulties and present them to the council in the order of your priorities. Also, it would be much better if you would present solutions along with the problems. He added: It is unfortunate that none of the problems of the universities have yet been resolved. But the relative solution to some of the problems is possible. I hope that this problem will be resolved, by the grace of God, as soon as possible. He continued: Building houses for professors and the creation of organizational

houses is one way to eliminate the problem of housing for university faculty and to attract committed professors.

In conclusion, Ayatollah Musavi-Ardabili requested the raising of the scholarly quality of the universities in the country.

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CSO: 4640/371

IRAN

BRIEFS

SUPREME JUDICIAL COUNCIL DECISIONS--Hojjatol-Eslam Morteza Moqteda'i, a member and speaker of the Supreme Judicial Council participated in a press, radio and television interview last Thursday and presented a report to the reporters about the main Supreme Judicial Council decisions and discussed last week's issues. First he said: "In one of the sessions of the council, the problems of the city morgue, its lack of staff and the methods of selecting physicians, employment, financial questions and the location for city morgue offices was discussed and decisions have been made in each case." The speaker of the Supreme Judicial Council then spoke about some of the letters of complaint received by the council and said: "After investigating some of the letters, it was evident that some addresses and signatures were forged and that the sender did not exist. Therefore we have advised the centers accepting the complaints to be more careful about incoming complaint mail in order not to unduly agitate the individual's prestige." In regard to the manner of activities of the judicial police established at the airport he said: "Some decisions have been made in regard to the responsibilities of the judicial police in the council and the organization will be officially notified."

Mr Moqteda'i in regard to the pardon of prisoners on the occasion of the anniversary of the revolution then said: "Details have been composed in a circular regarding the pardon of the prisoners and delivered to his eminent imam and after his approval they will be issued to the judicial authorities." Also in regard to the rumor of the imprisonment of Bahai's and the analysis of the foreign radio in this regard he said: "Up to now no Bahai's have been imprisoned in Iran just for being Bahai unless they have been active in spying or secret and counterrevolutionary organizations." The speaker of the supreme judicial council at the conclusion talked about holding the antiheadquarters for study and research of the Islamic law system which is among the four subjects in the Islamic international judiciary law seminar and added: "In this regard it is approved that each of the members of the council will continue work on a specified part of the project." [Text] [Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 2 Feb 85 p 2] 9815

DECREASE IN IMPORTS--Based on a report titled "The Important Activities of Iranian Customs in Regard to the Import and Export of Goods and the Arrival and Exit of Passengers" issued in Nov-Dec of the current year: In Nov-Dec 1984 a total of 1,279,755 tons of goods were received in the nation's customs. At the same time a total of 1,415,624 tons of goods with a value of over 77.217 billion rials were released from different customs houses. The weight of imported goods compared to the same month last year decreased 38.77 percent. The released goods decreased 2.3 percent in weight and 52.1 percent in value compared to the same month last year. Exports of non-petroleum products of the country during the mentioned month was 9899 tons with a value of over 2.455 billion rials. This is a decrease of 56.8 percent by weight and 43.8 percent by value compared to the same month last year. During the same month, 98,291 passengers entered the country by air, land and sea of which 64,097 were Iranian and the rest foreigners. During the same time 104,505 passengers left the country of which 69,270 were Iranian. Most of these passengers entered and exited in this order from the customs of Mehrabad, Bazargan, Bandarabas, Shiraz and Bushehr. [Text] [Tehran BURS in Persian 22 Jan 85 p 3] 9815

CSO: 4640/365

PAKISTAN

IMPLICATIONS OF KISSINGER'S VISIT TO PAKISTAN DISCUSSED

Rawalpindi HURMAT in Urdu 26 Jan-4 Feb 85 pp 18-19

[Article: "Kissinger's Visit May Increase the Danger on Our Western Border"]

[Excerpt] Dr Kissinger is a highly experienced statesman who in the past has resolved many a political and diplomatic deadlock. The purpose of his visit to Pakistan will be discovered only when we come to know its outcome. Some of his statements, however, lead us to conclude that his purpose was not to work for peace in this region but to prepare Pakistan as a partner-in-arms against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Dr Kissinger has said that Pakistan is the first line of defense to save the Free World. Clearly, this implies that by resisting Soviet expansionism in Afghanistan, Pakistan has made the Free World secure. Dr Kissinger's statement is receiving many different interpretations. Political analysts believe he is acknowledging U.S. actions of helping the Afghans against the Soviets. The United States recently agreed to give a large sum of money in aid to the Afghan Mujahedin.

According to this program, the Afghan freedom fighters would be given some arms and ammunition, chiefly anti-aircraft guns. In the past, the Afghans were defeated by the Soviets because they had no arms to resist Soviet helicopter raids, except the Sam missiles given by Egypt.

Dr Kissinger does not tell us what he has brought for Pakistan to make it a stronghold against the Soviets. All that Pakistan got from the United States is an F-16 plane that Pakistan bought at the regular retail price. After that, Pakistan wanted to get some instruments of strategic importance that would help it detect the secret movements of enemy troops. When the delegation of U.S. Senators, led by Sen Glenn, came to Pakistan, they were told that in view of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, steps should be taken to give greater security to Pakistan. Later, on the occasion of the visit of General Vessey, this point was stressed again. Now, during the visit of Dr Kissinger, the presence of our military personnel in meetings with him shows that Pakistan's military problems must have been discussed. During his visit to Pakistan, Dr Kissinger was granted the Quaid-e-Azam Medal. What service has Dr Kissinger rendered Pakistan to deserve such an honor? Only the Pakistani Government can answer that question, but it has led to a bitter controversy in the country.

The head of Tahrik-e Istiqlal, and an important leader of the MRD, Air Marshal Asghar Khan, has denounced it strongly. In the same way, a well-known defense analyst, Ghaffar Mehdi, has criticized it. He says that Dr Kissinger was in the forefront of those who broke up Pakistan and carved Bangladesh. Hanif Ramay, on the other hand, says that after Bangladesh was created, Dr Kissinger did a lot to save what remained of Pakistan.

Clearly, all through this controversy Dr Kissinger's statements about Pakistan being the bulwark against Soviet expansionism have been kept in view. Critics of the Pakistani Government's policies say that this country has earned the enmity of a next-door neighbor and superpower such as the USSR just in order to support the U.S. policy in this region. We can dismiss their statements as mere political sniping against the Pakistani Government, but Dr Kissinger's statements can increase the danger on the Western border. The Geneva talks that were to have taken place in February have been postponed, but the Soviet attacks on our borders continue and could be accelerated.

12476  
CSO: 4656/90

PAKISTAN

ISLAMIC COMMON MARKET URGED TO COUNTER DOMINANCE OF WEST

Karachi JASARAT in Urdu 6 Feb 85 p 3

[Editorial: "Need for an Islamic Common Market"]

[Text] Sharifuddin Pirzada, general secretary of the Islamic Conference, has stressed the need for the establishment of an Islamic common market. Addressing the financial leaders of the member countries of the Islamic Conference in Decca, he explained the new and intricate economic situation faced by Muslim countries and called the establishment of an Islamic common market a "must" for resolving these problems. There are many reasons why there should be economic and social cooperation between Islamic countries. First, being one religious community, they should have deep mutual relations in order to help and strengthen each other. If we are united economically, our political and religious unity will be easier to achieve. If on the other hand Muslim countries have clashing economic interests, and if their economic problems are solved with the help of non-Muslim countries, such economies will never lead us to the ideal of Islamic unity. The Muslim countries will become more and more estranged from each other. If a scheme for planned social and economic cooperation is created, this mutual help will ultimately lead to cooperation in the political and religious fields as well. Thus, economic cooperation will help and not hinder our political and ideological aims.

Another reason for the establishment of a common market is that now the time of isolated nationalism is a thing of the past. The world has left narrow nationalism and entered the era of internationalism. Internationalism is the need of the time. No country now can make progress in isolation. Nations must cooperate in economics. The Europeans realized it long ago and started to think about a European parliament and European Common Market. They have already started working on these plans. But Muslims are still ignoring the fact that they are one economic unit by virtue of their religion and have not yet formulated a scheme for economic cooperation and mutual help. Now it has become essential that the Muslims organize their own common market on the lines of the European Common Market, in which every country's commercial and industrial interests are protected and all of the hurdles in their path are removed. At present, Muslim countries are divided into the rich and the poor. The problem for the poor Muslim countries is that they have no capital but possess education, workmanship and technical know-how. The rich Muslim countries, on the other hand, have

capital and want to invest it in business that is secure and profitable. In the past, Europe and America fulfilled this need. But now the capitalist world is in the grip of a great economic upheaval. Thousands of companies in the United States, Britain and Japan have gone bankrupt. A state of depression is to be found everywhere. Under these circumstances, the capitalist world is unsuitable for the investment of our capital. If on the other hand Muslim countries pool their surplus money and invest it in the Islamic world, their money would be secure and in their own control. Think of the deposits of natural and mineral wealth that are found in the Islamic world. The capitalist world has an interest in exploiting them. But if the Islamic countries set up their own corporations to find and exploit these mineral deposits, they could own all that wealth independently. Western countries are curbing exports of oil and raw materials from Islamic countries and also devaluing their currency, which is having an adverse effect on the Muslim countries. If the Muslims do not form a united economic front against the Western capitalists, and if they remain scattered as they are now, they will not only never be able to solve their problems, but will sustain a crushing defeat at the hands of the capitalists and imperialists. They will become subjugated to them economically and politically.

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CSO: 4656/90

PAKISTAN

MUSLIM LEAGUE LEADER PROPOSES NEW POLITICAL DIVISIONS

Rawalpindi HURMAT in Urdu 15-24 Jan 85 pp 9, 10

[Special interview with distinguished worker at the Pakistan Movement and veteran Muslim League leader Mir Abdullah Khan Rokari by a HURMAT representative: "Every Division of Pakistan Should Be Turned Into a Province; President Ziaul Haq Should Proceed on the Path of Enforcing Islam With Order and Restraint"; date and place not specified]

[Excerpts] [Question] Why is the Muslim League not being united and organized?

[Answer] Actually, there are personal interests working behind that.

[Question] Can a lack of harmony in political objectives, also not become a source of conflict?

[Answer] The only thing that I will say in this regard is that if we can successfully organize, once again, the broken pieces of the Muslim League we are left with, it can be, even today, capable of leadership.

[Question] At the time of the establishment of Pakistan, under the leadership of Quaid-e Azam, one of the slogans among those shouted by the Muslim League was that Pakistan would be made an Islamic welfare state. Did this happen?

[Answer] No, I have already told you the conditions that existed before 1950. At that time, the paramount national issue, that is, the settlement of the refugees, had not been fully completed. Those were the people who had arrived here after leaving behind their homes and belongings and sacrificing their close relatives for the sake of Pakistan. Since 1950, however, a bureaucratic government has been in power. So how can the problems of the people be resolved? These are the very things that are blocking the path to converting Pakistan into an Islamic welfare state.

[Question] Even today there are three groups of the Muslim League--the Qayum group, the Pagara group and the Malik Qasim group. Is there any chance of unity among them?

[Answer] I have tried my level best in this regard, but I have gained nothing but disappointment.

[Question] Are you satisfied with the speed at which the country is progressing under the current administration? Furthermore, what would you say about the fair distribution of wealth?

[Answer] I am a villager. The truth of the matter is that due to the unjust distribution of wealth, our village population is suffering grievously. It is given no portion in the distribution of wealth. The regions comprising backward and poor inhabitants are being ignored. They are not included in the development of the country. For example, the irony is that in the areas where eggs and poultry are produced, neither of these items is available to the people, whereas other people enjoy themselves at the expense of their hard work. The poor people of these regions pay taxes, but those who own mills belong to different regions. This is total injustice. Just compare and see how many medical colleges and universities there are in Lahore. But if a student from our region goes there for admission, he is turned down on the grounds that he got a 3d division, i.e., low marks. The situation of educational retardation is such that in the backward regions, matric pass teachers [teachers with high school diplomas] are teaching the matric students. How, then, can you expect a student of Mianwali or Bhakar to attain a better position in the national exam? English has become the mother tongue of this country. In Lahore, a 6-year-old child speaks English, but even a graduate youth from our region cannot speak English. After all, for how long will the people of these backward regions show forebearance? There is a limit to injustice. My suggestion, therefore, is that all four provinces of Pakistan should further be divided into units, so that every region acquires equal opportunities for development, and every division should be turned into a province. In this way, Pakistan, too, will be strong. Injustice will be redressed. The country's resources will be fairly distributed, and the provinces will be able to receive equal grants. No one will have anything to complain about, just as there is an outcry against Punjab that it usurps the rights of the other provinces. I feel that the division of provinces will eliminate this complaint. After all, what is the harm in dividing the Punjab? Under the present circumstances, Pakistan's integrity could be endangered. Therefore, I will only stress the need to divide the provinces. Personally, I would prefer to see a division of Punjab Province rather than, God forbid, the division of Pakistan.

[Question] Do you feel that the present formation of the provinces is incorrect?

[Answer] Yes, just make a comparative analysis of these provinces and study the circumstances. There are other countries in the world that are divided into many provinces. In this regard, the example of Turkey and United States can be used. I believe that it will make no difference if every division is turned into a province. In this way, everyone will gain equal opportunities for progress.

[Question] Currently, the administration is busy trying to enforce the Islamic system in the country, and it also enjoys your party, the Muslim League's, support. In your view, what is the significance of these efforts?

[Answer] Let me tell you! I believe in the enforcement of Islam, but, along with that, I am also a supporter of the Islamic constitution. I hold, in my heart, great respect and esteem for the honorable Muslim theologians. Nevertheless, I do not believe in 'Mullaism', i.e., the priesthood system.

[Question] What do you mean by Mullaism?

[Answer] I do not believe in an ignorant and illiterate maulvi. However, I have great respect in my heart for well-educated and scholarly theologians.

[Question] Theoretically, though, your party supports the efforts to enforce Islam, but what are the administrative and constitutional differences?

[Answer] This is my personal viewpoint. Right now, I am not presenting the stand taken by my party; instead, I am expressing my opinion as an individual. It is the task of Pir Pagara or other leaders to present the stand taken by the party.

[Question] With reference to the enforcement of Islam, my question actually was, "Will President Ziaul Haq's efforts in this regard prove beneficial in resolving the problems?"

[Answer] In my opinion, if, for the enforcement of Islam, President Ziaul Haq, instead of getting entangled in the low-level issues of Islamic law, continues his efforts according to the Holy Koran and the traditions (the practices of the Holy Prophet), those measures will definitely prove commendable. The president should proceed on this path with order and restraint.

9779

CSO: 4656/85

PAKISTAN

WALI KHAN HELD BY POLICE, DISCUSSES ELECTIONS WITH NEWSMEN

Lahore CHATAN in Urdu 21-28 Jan 85 p 24

[Special report from Rawalpindi: "Wali Khan at Gojar Khan Police Station"]

[Excerpt] It was anticipated that with the general meeting of the MRD at Abbottabad, there would be the possibility of peaceful compromise between the administration and the opposition. Certain leaders of the MRD were freed and furnished with facilities to participate in the meeting at Abbottabad. All of the prominent personalities of the MRD sat together, and the meeting continued for a long time. They unanimously passed a resolution that as long as the 1973 constitution is not reinstated, and the demand that the elections should be held on party basis is not accepted, the MRD will not participate in the general elections. It was decided that another meeting will be held in Lahore. On 21 January, Wali Khan, Ghulam Ahmad Bilore and Asghar Khan left for Lahore, but the police stopped them on the way. Asghar Khan was stopped at Tarnol. Wali Khan had already traveled a considerable distance when the Gojar Khan police stopped him near the law court. There were many lawyers present at the law court. The former secretary general of the Gojar Khan Bar and the legal advisor to the weekly magazine DIHAT (Village), Rashid Qamar, invited Wali Khan inside the bar. Wali Khan agreed, but the police refused and took him to the police station adjoining the court. The lawyers, too, accompanied him. When the police saw the huge crowd, they closed the main gate of the police station.

Rashid Qamar, who is also a native poet, asked Khan Sahib: Now that General Zia has announced that the elections will be held on a nonparty basis, why don't you participate in them? This, at least, will start the engine of democracy. In reply, Khan Sahib said: You are a lawyer and you understand the demands of the law and constitution. We hope that the elections will be held according to the 1973 constitution. This is the demand of the MRD as well. We feel that to hold the elections on a nonparty basis is a violation of the 1973 constitution. Furthermore, the candidates who are running in the nonparty elections are also committing a crime by violating the constitution. He said that the 1973 constitution was accepted by both the opposition and the elected members of the government. This is a national document and we cannot be guilty of opposing it.

Responding to Mr Rashid Qamar's question, Wali Khan revealed that he has a document from the U.S. Department of State which says that the holding of elections in Pakistan under the party system is not beneficial to the United States. He said that this document was presented in the MRD meeting. He disclosed that America, according to this document, does not want the elections in Pakistan to be held on a party basis. The document also says that if there is a war between the United States and the Soviet Union, the United States will attack the Soviet Union from Pakistan. If, however, the Soviet Union attacks the United States, it will have to attack the Pakistani bases. America, therefore, will still be safe.

Replying to another question, Khan Sahib said that every now and then Afghan aircraft commit border violations over Pakistan, but so far Pakistan has not resisted these incursions. He expressed profound grief and agony over the fact that the administration does not allow the MRD to get together. A "visa" is required to travel from one province to another. As long as our comrades do not sit in one place, we cannot exchange our views on national affairs. By that time, the Gojar Khan correspondent for JANG, Sardar Zia, also appeared. The lawyers introduced him to Wali Khan. Sardar Zia asked Wali Khan if the elections would be held on a party or nonparty basis. At this, Wali Khan, rubbing his hand over Sardar Zia's face, said, are you merely a correspondent or do you ever read the newspaper as well? The color of Sardar Zia's face changed. He fell so silent that he dared not ask another question.

Finally, Wali Khan asked the police officers what he was supposed to do next. He was told that they had been instructed to accompany him to Hasan Abdal. Wali Khan asked them to show a written order instead of a verbal one. Then he himself said that this is not a difficult task, either; just now, a written instruction from the A.C. will appear.

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CSO: 4656/85

PAKISTAN

ANSARI COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS MANIPULATED BY CURRENT REGIME

Karachi JASARAT in Urdu 8 Feb 85 p 3

[Editorial: "Maulana Ansari's Anguish and Anxiety"]

[Text] Maulana Zafar Ahmad Ansari enjoys a prominent status among our philosophers. People who are far from the action and are merely thinkers, however, often being intoxicated with the obsession of thinking, indulge in philosophical constructions that benefit the ruling sector, whose aim is to keep its authority safe and provide a justification for doing so. This is what happened with Maulana Ansari. The logic he presented supporting and advocating elections on a nonparty basis did not, however, receive public acceptance, nor was this possible, but the harm it caused was that the group in power used the reports of the Ansari Commission as a means of negating the political parties and powers. Later on, however, the mistreatment this report received and is consistently receiving--this has now brought agony to Ansari Sahib. His recent interview reflects the state of his misery.

Maulana Ansari disclosed in this interview that according to his recommendations, the true supreme power is not the president or the ruler himself, but the elected representatives and institutions. The commission had decided that these elected institutions alone would be authorized to elect the president, and they alone, by majority vote, would have the right to depose him. The commission's recommendation was not for a referendum. This is not mentioned anywhere in our report. Similarly, we had also proposed that the president would not have the right to disband the national assembly, and it would be able to complete its full term. Never would the president have the right to rule without the assembly by either totally or partially suspending the constitution. The president was also not granted the authority to enforce an emergency situation, and it was decided that whatever recommendations the National Security Council might make for an emergency situation, they would be enforced only after receiving confirmation from the assembly. If the confirmation was not received within 30 days, the National Security Council would not have the authority to declare an emergency. After that, recommendations the security council would make to the assembly regarding the emergency would include participation by the supreme courts, members of the Shariat courts, the federal censors, the chairman of the Islamic ideological council and the leaders of both houses of the assembly.

The thing that is clearly evident from Ansari Sahib's above statements is that the commission had made a recommendation for a system in which the elected representatives and the parliament were granted more supremacy than they had in the 1973 constitution; while the president had to adhere to and obey the parliament in every matter. Our rulers, however, very skillfully made only the story of party and nonparty elections known, ignoring all the other things. Probably, in view of the concern that the real recommendations of the commission stay hidden from the people, the administration did not publish that report for a long time. When it did, it was in a limited number, so that the people would not know about the report. Finally, Ansari Sahib himself had to enter the arena. With the aid of his friends and eulogists, he published more copies of the report, and he also gave numerous interviews to clarify and elucidate it. Nevertheless, since the argument about party and nonparty elections overwhelmed all other matters, Ansari Sahib's true recommendations were pushed into the background, which is what the rulers also wanted. Later on, by ignoring the commission's report, they did whatever they liked. The commission had declared the necessity of showing the identity card and having it punched as essential for voting, and it had said that without this procedure, fair elections could not even be imagined. In the beginning, this proposal involving the identity card was accepted, but, at the last moment, that, too, was eliminated.

In his recent interview, Maulana Ansari also raised the issue of the powers of the president regarding constitutional amendments. He expressed the opinion that in this regard, it is the task of the Supreme Court to decide whether the president has the authority for amendments or not, and if he does, to what extent? It was the Supreme Court alone that, under certain conditions, granted the present ruler the right to rule the country, and it alone can judge now whether this right has been utilized correctly or it is exceeding its limits. This means that the amendments proposed by the president can go to the supreme court--rather, they should go there--and it is there that a decision on the validity and justification of the proposed amendments will be made. It will be a good thing if it happens that way, because it will fulfill constitutional demands, and the fear that the ruling personalities will impose on the nation whatever and whichever constitutional amendments they like will disappear. In response to this, it can be said that with the recent referendum, the president has acquired the authority to amend the constitution. But the affirmative votes cast in the referendum are in support of the enforcement of Islam only. This might also lead President Ziaul Haq to conclude that he has gained another 5 years for his presidency. The referendum, however, has not granted the president any such authority to annul or mutilate the 1973 constitution or to impose amendments of an undemocratic nature according to his own will. Therefore, if any incorrect amendment appears in this regard, it will be referred to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court cannot be prevented from considering the matter and reaching a final decision; since the present rulers acquired the right to rule from the Supreme Court, and the 1973 constitution is not suspended. Instead, the administrators have promised to retain it with the Supreme Court and to revive it. The Supreme Court, therefore, is not only authorized to make its evaluation and obtain all vital clarifications concerning this matter, but that is its responsibility. Whatever Ansari Sahib has said in this regard is totally correct and justifiable. The agony or anxiety on the basis of which he issued these statements is worth examining. We support Ansari Sahib's anguish concerning this matter. Please God the confrontational threats do not prove a reality, and may all the sectors be able to satisfactorily approve the amendments to be announced by the president.

PAKISTAN

NO MUSLIMS AMONG SPIES EXPOSED IN INDIA

Karachi JASARAT in Urdu 6 Feb 85 p 3

[Editorial: "India's Spy Scandal"]

[Text] Several groups of spies have been caught in India, most of whom consist of Hindus, along with a few Christians and Sikhs. None of the spies was a Muslim. These spies sold India's state and defense secrets to foreign governments and received no high rewards for doing so. One man sold state secrets for 50 rupees, and another said he was willing to work as a spy for 300 to 400 rupees. These are the moral standards of some important members of the Hindu community, such that they can sell their national secrets for a pittance. We should remember that the religious organizations of these very Hindus have always demanded that Indian Muslims give proof of their patriotism. In the eyes of these bigots, Indian Muslims are suspects and traitors. These Hindu organizations are always raising a hue and cry against "Pakistani spies." We would like to ask these narrowminded Hindus why they demand proof of patriotism from Indian Muslims (none of whom has been caught spying) when members of their own community are selling state secrets for small sums of money. They should teach patriotism to Hindus. Perhaps they can only see the mote in other people's eyes? Why are they always raising a hue and cry against Muslims and Pakistan?

Now it is said that India no longer has any state secrets. The United States, France, Britain and the Soviets have bought all their secrets at a nominal price. India's state secrets are the cheapest commodity in the world of espionage.

Indian leaders should learn a lesson from the present situation. They should realize that patriotism does not stem from communal hatred; it only results from high moral standards and a faith in ethical ideals. A society in which drinking is habitual and everybody is running after a high standard of living, and where Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth is worshipped, there can be no lofty moral standards. Indian society is devoid of all moral content, but they try to cover up their moral bankruptcy behind a glittering culture. We do not generally see what is happening behind the curtain. But this spy scandal has lifted the curtain and shown us how low India has fallen morally and spiritually, despite its negative progress and its gigantic military build-up. This moral depravity cannot be cured by the Hindu communalists.

12476  
CSO: 4656/90

PAKISTAN

OIL EXPLORATION EFFORTS WELCOMED

GF171100 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 10 Mar 85 p 4

[Editorial: "An All-Out Drive for Oil"]

[Text] In a period of falling export earnings, rising imports and increasing balance of payments deficit, oil can become a major saviour for Pakistan. And it is, indeed, heartening that oil output in the country has far outstripped the modest Sixth Plan target of 21,000 barrels per day by 1987-1988 and reached 28,000 barrels now. Dr Mohammad Asad Khan has indicated that it would peak to 30,000 barrels by the end of this month. That will enable the country to meet 33 percent of its demand through indigenous production compared to barely 9 percent 18 months ago.

The rapid increase in oil production has undoubtedly brought the oil import bill down in a big way. Instead of the Sixth Plan projection of 1,799 million dollars to be spent on oil import during 1983-1984, the actual import cost was 1,450 million dollars, despite the steady increase in domestic consumption. The saving of about Rs500 crore is, indeed, very welcome at a time when the country has to pay heavily for its large edible oil imports as well as tea, the price of which has shot up. Due to the increase in oil output this year, the import bill which hit the peak of RS20.9 billion in 1982-1983 ought to come down this year.

In oil exploration, as in many other spheres, success brings further success. Success in finding oil, and in increasingly commercial quantities, is making foreign oil companies show keen interest in oil exploration in Pakistan, and in intensifying their exploration efforts. It is proper, too, that under the new policy foreign oil companies are not permitted to sit on their concessions for long but have to get down to exploration work quickly or surrender them. If despite this policy, three agreements have been signed with foreign companies during the last few months, and agreements with four or five more are to follow in the next few months, it is indeed encouraging.

Some of the credit for such a rapid increase in oil output, as well as a sharp rise in drilling and rising involvement of foreign oil companies in the national effort, goes to Dr Asad Khan who as minister for petroleum and natural resources took a direct personal interest in the campaign and has been able to convince a large number of foreign companies of the advantages of looking for oil in Pakistan. It is, indeed, heartening that offshore drilling for oil is to begin soon despite the heavy cost.

Dr Asad has said that a committee of experts and his ministry have come up with their recommendations for a new national mineral policy which was now receiving final shape. Among the recommendations, he says, is one which suggests the setting up of a sizeable mineral fund for exploration of mineral resources, using the latest and most efficient equipment.

Welcome, too, is the beginning of work on construction of the Oil and Gas Training Institute to be built at a cost of Rs.1.9 crore with advanced equipment provided by Canada as aid at a cost of 21.7 million dollars. This certainly should help increase the number of trained technical personnel and give a major boost to the vital and costly exploration efforts.

CSO: 4600/342

PAKISTAN

OIL WELL TESTED SAID LARGEST IN COUNTRY

GF220916 Karachi DAWN in English 18 Mar 85 p 1

[Text] Karachi, 17 Mar--Pakistan's largest oil and gas well, with a flow rate of between 12,000 and 14,000 barrels per day [bpd] of oil and over 25 mmcfd [million cubic feet per day] of gas, has been tested by Occidental Petroleum Company at Dhurnol-ii, 40 miles southwest of Islamabad, oil sector sources told DAWN.

Officials in Islamabad were, however, reluctant to give the exact figures but acting chairman of the OGDC [Oil and Gas Development Corporation] said "a figure of over 7,000 bpd will be safe to publish at this stage."

Mr Zakauddin Malik, when contacted over the telephone in Islamabad, however, confirmed that it was "the largest oil well so far found in Pakistan.

Oil sources said Occidental considers the well to be the biggest, it has struck in Pakistan and estimates a steady output of over 10,000 bpd plus 25 mmcfd of gas.

The well is located in the Dhurnol field--a concession granted to Occidental in the North Pothohar basin comprising almost 300,000 acres.

Experts say when confirmation testing was carried out, the flow rate was above 14,000 bpd but OGDC chairman said nothing firm could be said about the actual production until more testing was done.

He said Dhurnol-iii was already being drilled and a clear picture would emerge about the reserve and potential only after the three wells are complete.

Dhurnol-i was completed in April last year and is now said to be producing about 5,500 barrels per day of 37.6 degree gravity oil and 17 mmcfd of gas.

Besides Occidental, OGDC also has a 20-percent share in the Pothohar concession.

The oil was found at a depth of between 12,500 to 13,400 feet and flowed at a rate of 12,702 barrels a day of 39 degrees gravity and 33 mmcfd of gas at a choke of half-an-inch, oil sources said.

A deeper test at 13,600 to 13,900 feet, however, gave a much reduced flow of 2,000 bpd of oil and 4.5 mmcfd of gas at a choke of 20/64 inches, sources said.

OGDC chairman told DAWN, detailed testing of the Tando Alam field in Sind and Panjpir in Punjab was also being done and until more wells were drilled, the exact quantities available could not be correctly gauged.

Oil experts said the stabilised production from Dhurnol-ii, to be available shortly, would increase Pakistan's domestic oil production by at least 8,000 to 10,000 barrels-a-day, besides the gas.

Although announcement of the find is yet to be made officially by the Petroleum Ministry, sources said the expected increase in production was being included in projections being prepared by the ministry for the short-term oil outlook in the country.

"The minister of petroleum has been busy with his election and probably this was one reason why the announcement has been delayed," one observer said in Islamabad.

Occidental is also drilling other wells in the Badin concession in Sind in collaboration with Union Texas of Pakistan. Both these American companies have a 30-percent share with OGDC having the rest in the Badin block.

Experts say one major problem to be faced will be the transportation of the crude to the Attock Oil Refinery until the 35-mile, 10 inches wide pipeline, capable of carrying 30,000 barrels-a-day is completed.

The scheduled completion date for the pipeline is by the end of this year or early next year, source added.

CSO: 4600/342

END